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from the town of Wilton

AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

IN

WILTON, N. H., SEPT. 25, 1839.

BY EPHRAIM PEABODY.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

Boston;
PUBLISHED BY B. H. GREENE.
PRINTED BY I. R. BUTTS.

1839.



Recd. Office, 1839.

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At a legal Town-meeting held April 30, 1839, it was "*Voted*, That the Town, some day in the course of the present year, celebrate the One Hundredth Anniversary of the settlement of the same." The town at the same time appropriated a sum of money to defray the expenses of the Celebration.

It was also "*Voted*, That a copy of the Address to be then delivered, be furnished, if printed, to each family in the town, at the town's expense."—The following gentlemen were chosen for the Committee of Arrangements, viz. Messrs. Jonathan Livermore, Jonathan Parkhurst, Zebediah Abbot, David Wilson, Ezra Abbot, Abel Fisk, Joseph Smith, Abram Whittemore, John Dale, Elijah Stockwell, Caleb Putnam, Josiah Parker, Daniel Batchelder, Oliver Whiting, Asa Stiles, Sam'l King, Moses Lovejoy, Jr., Joseph Newell, Joseph Gray, Jr., Timothy Parkhurst, Samuel Sheldon, Jr., Timothy Abbot, Jonathan Burton, Ashby Morgan. The 25th day of September was appointed for the festival.

At a meeting of the Committee of Arrangements, Jonathan Livermore, Timothy Parkhurst, Abel Fiske and Abiel Abbot were appointed a sub-committee to collect materials respecting the history of Wilton for the Address, and were instructed to invite Rev. Ephraim Peabody, of New Bedford, Mass., to prepare said Address.

After the day of celebration, Jonathan Livermore and Abiel Abbot were appointed a publishing committee. Having requested and received a copy of the Address, they have added to it such statistical details as they have thought might be interesting, and also an account of the Proceedings on the Day of Celebration; all of which they now submit to their fellow citizens of Wilton.

JONATHAN LIVERMORE.
ABIEL ABBOT.

A D D R E S S .

WE meet this day to commemorate our Fathers. Around us are the products of their toil. In laborious poverty they accumulated this abundance for their children. Our comforts speak of their hardships; our advantages, of their deprivations. On every side, are the proofs of their thoughtful, self-forgetting care for the welfare of their descendants. Here are the institutions established by their wise foresight; on every side, lying warm in the sun, spread out the cultivated fields, freed by their labor from the forest; here yet may be seen the foundations of their dwellings; and here too — forever sacred let them be! — are their graves.

We stand on the horizon that divides two centuries. As the subject suitable for the occasion, I would dwell, first; on the history of the town during the past century; — and secondly, a topic suggested by the preceding one, consider some of the chief causes on which our New England towns have been dependent for their growth and prosperity.

When we point to a well-peopled town, to a community possessing all the comforts and desirable luxuries of life, and blest with settled institutions to bring within reach of all the means of mental, moral, and religious instruction, and then say that a hundred years ago none of these existed; that the region which is now sending emigrants over the whole world, was then itself first explored by emigrants who watched against the Indian, the wolf and the bear; we see the whole amount of change, but we have a very imperfect idea of the hardships and labors encountered in bringing it about. A single incident may show us through what our fathers passed. The first death that occurred was that of John Badger, in Feb. 1740. He died in the night. The nearest neighbor was three miles distant, and the ground was covered deep with snow. His wife composed him on the bed as for rest, left her children, (of whom she had three, the oldest but eight years of age,) with their breakfast, and with strict injunctions not to awake their father, as he was asleep, and putting on her snow-shoes proceeded to seek assistance. That indeed was a dreary morning as she went forth through the solitary woods of winter. Death is in her home, and her children wait her return. Uphold her trembling heart, thou Father of the fatherless and the widow's God! Neighbors returned with her. A tree was hollowed out for a coffin, and so in the solitude was he committed to the earth. Death at all times comes, chilling the hearts of men with awe and fear. Even in populous cities, in the midst of the throng and busy voices of life, an awful sense of solitude rests on those who witness the departure of the dying; and days and years shall pass, and they who beheld the scene shall enter that chamber

with silent steps and hushed voices and a shadow over their souls. What then must have been her loneliness, — a solitary widow in the wilderness. She must watch by the bedside of her children alone; her tears shall be shed alone — she shall no more kneel by her husband's side to pray — his voice shall no more waken her at morning, and when the night approaches she shall unconsciously look forth to the forest, watching for his return, who shall never return again.

A single example like this shows the hardships of the first settlers of a new region, better than any general description, however extended. But turning from the deprivations to which individuals were subjected, it may be interesting for us to trace briefly the gradual growth of the town.

In June, 1735, the Massachusetts General Court granted to Samuel King and others,* in consideration "of their sufferings" in the expedition to Canada in the year 1690, the township of Lyndeborough and about one third of Wilton on the north side, under the name of Salem Canada. In this part of Wilton, in June, 1739, was the first settlement made. The first settlers were Ephraim and Jacob Putnam and John Dale,†

* We are indebted to Joseph H. Abbot, Esq. for consulting the records of the General Court of Massachusetts on this point, where under date of June 19, 1735, the petition of King may be found. A copy of the same has been deposited by Mr. Abbot in the Wilton ministerial library.

† For the first three years after the settlement of Wilton, the wife of Jacob Putnam was the only woman who resided permanently in the town. During one winter, such was the depth of snow in the woods and such the distance of neighbors, that for the space of six months, she saw no one except the members of her own family. A part of the farm which belonged to Jacob Putnam, is still in the possession of his grandson, Caleb Putnam, who on the day of the centennial celebration exhibited at the meeting-house, a hill of corn raised on the land where a settlement was made a hundred years before.

The farm which was owned by John Dale is also now in the possession of his grandson, John Dale. This year he raises upon it more than four hundred

who removed to this place from Danvers, Massachusetts.

In 1749, the Masonian Proprietors made a grant of the rest of the town, under certain conditions, to forty-six persons. Forty-six shares were conveyed to them by a deed, dated October 1, 1749, each share containing two hundred and forty acres, to be drawn by lot. Besides these, two lots of eighty acres each, were granted "for encouragement for building mills." One share for the first settled minister, one share for the ministry and one for schools. The principal conditions were, that the grantees should make all highways, — the proprietors not being subject to any tax; — should build a church by November, 1752; — should have made settlements and built a house on forty lots; and that each settler should pay thirteen dollars and thirty-three cents to aid in bringing forward the settlement. Delinquents were to forfeit their land, except in case of an Indian war; — and white pine trees were to be reserved for the British navy. The grantees had it laid out, and annexed to a part of Salem Canada, and called No. 2. It was incorporated June 25th, 1762, under the name of Wilton, a name probably derived from Wilton an ancient borough in Wiltshire, England; and the first town-meeting was held July 27th, 1762, twenty-three years after the first settlement. Before the Revolution, a range of

bushels of grain. The house that he now resides in, was the first two story frame house in town. A man was killed in the raising of it — an iron bar falling accidentally on his head from the hands of a man on the frame above, and killing him instantly.

John Dale's (the first settler) eldest daughter taught the first school in town, and for some years was the only female teacher.

Ephraim Putnam, the remaining one of the first settlers, after residing here a short time, removed to Lyndeborough. His farm was taken by John Crane.

lots, half a mile wide, was set off to Temple ; and thus the town finally assumed its present size and shape.*

Improvements of all kinds, of course, were slow and gradual. The first settlers went to Dunstable to mill ; and when Shepherd's mills in Milford, seven miles distant, were built, it was so great a convenience, that it was hardly thought less of than a modern railroad. The first grist-mill in Wilton was built by Deac. Samuel Greele, of Nottingham-West, at the same place where there is one now carried on by Fiske Russell. The first saw-mill was near Philip Putnam's set of mills on the North Stream. The second grist and saw-mill was Hutchinson's, at the East Village, on the same spot as now. These were all the grist-mills erected before the Revolution.

The roads were at first little more than footpaths, marked by spotted trees. For a long time there were apprehensions of danger from Indians. Wilton seems, indeed, never to have been a fixed residence for them, but merely a hunting ground. They, however, lived along the Merrimack, and in time of hostility, or when hostility was feared, the first settlers went into garrison. This continued about ten years. One garrison was in Milford, north of the Souhegan, near the Peabody Place. The other was in Lyndeborough, near where

* The first settlers of that part of Wilton south of Salem-Canada, were Scotch, about a dozen families of whom were in the town when it was incorporated. As other families came in, they left, till at the time of the Revolution all but two families had disappeared. The present inhabitants are entirely of the Puritan stock. John Burton, the ancestor of those of that name now residing in the town, was from Middleton, Mass. The Holts, Abbots, Thomas Russell, Samuel Pet-tengill were from Andover ; Kings, Stevens, Parkhurst were from Chelmsford. And nearly all the remaining families that came here before the Revolution were from the same towns.

Ephraim Putnam settled. Descendants of his live there to this day.

The Ecclesiastical History of our New England towns has always been of great interest and importance. It must be gratifying to all whose native place is Wilton, that the means of religious improvement have always been carefully provided by its inhabitants. When the town was first laid out, one share of two hundred and forty acres was set apart for the first minister, and another for the support of the ministry. From the sale of the latter arose the ministerial fund, amounting now to about two thousand seven hundred dollars, the interest of which is appropriated annually to the support of the ministry in the town. There had already been occasional preaching most of the time; and from the records it appears that at least two persons had been invited to settle here; but the first minister actually settled was Mr. Jonathan Livermore, who was ordained Dec. 14, 1763. On the same day a church was formed consisting of eight male members. Mr. Livermore was minister thirteen years and resigned. It may be mentioned as an interesting fact, that there were only two families in town during his ministry whose children were not baptized. The first meeting-house was built in 1752. It was used twenty-one years and then taken down. The second meeting-house,—the one in which we are now assembled,—was built during the ministry of Mr. Livermore. They commenced raising it September 7, 1773. Such things were conducted differently then from what they are now. It was considered the work of two days. People came from distant towns to see the spectacle. There was great note of preparation. A committee of the town appointed

the raisers, and ample provisions were made to entertain strangers.*

It was a beautiful September morning. And now might be seen coming in by every road, and from the neighboring towns, great numbers, men, women and children, to see the show. Some came on foot; some practised the method, unknown in modern days, of riding and tying; some were on horseback, with their wives or sisters behind on a pillion. It was an occasion of universal expectation. The timbers were all prepared, the workmen ready, and the master-workman, full of the dignity of his office, issuing his orders to his aids. All went on prosperously. The good cheer, the excitement of the work, the crowd of spectators, men looking on, women telling the news, boys playing their various games, all made it a scene of general rejoicing. The sides of the house were already up, and also a part of the roof at the east end of the building. One of the raisers from Lyndeborough, Capt. Bradford, had brought over his wife, whom he left, on account of illness, at the place where Mr. Baldwin now resides, while he himself went on to take part in the work. Having to pass along the centre of the building, he observed that the middle beam, extending across the church, was not properly supported. A post was under the centre, but it was worm-eaten, and was already beginning to yield and give way under the pressure. In raising the middle part of the roof, the weight of the workmen would come in great measure on this beam, which was evidently not

* Among other things, — which might, indeed, in part account for the accident that followed, — the town “Voted to provide, one barrel of West India rum, five barrels of New England rum, one barrel of good brown sugar, half a box of good lemons, and two loaves of loaf sugar, for framing and raising the meeting-house.”

strong enough to bear up the timbers and men. He immediately ascended the roof and informed the master-workman, who, being made over-confident by the success thus far, replied to him, that if he was afraid he might go home; that they wanted no cowards there. Indignant, he immediately went down, and started off for his wife, with the purpose of returning home. But before he had reached Mr. Baldwin's, the men had already proceeded forward, confident and elated at their progress. They were swarming upon the unsupported beam and the planks and timbers which rested on it. They were raising up, with much exertion and shouts of direction and encouragement, the beams and rafters, when suddenly, as he was anxiously looking back, he saw the frame already erected, tremble, the men shrink back aghast; the building seemed to rock for a moment to and fro, and suddenly all, timbers and tools and men, rushed down together in one mingled mass, in the centre. The crash was so loud as to be heard nearly a mile. For a moment all was silent, and then the air was filled with groans, and outcries, and shrieks of terror. There were fifty-three men on the frame that fell. Three were instantly killed; two died very shortly afterwards; others were crippled for life, and most of them were more or less mangled or wounded. To understand the impression that the event made at the time, it must be remembered that the whole population of the town, men, women and children, was scarcely five hundred. It was like so many men lost overboard from a ship at sea. It caused a general mourning, for there were few families which had not lost a friend, or connexion, or some one of whose friends were not among the wounded. At a Fast which was kept,

Mr. Livermore preached from the words, (Ps. cxxvii, 1,) which then must have been peculiarly impressive: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Superstition came in to darken the event. A man by the name of Isaac Russell had been killed by the fall of a tree which he had himself cut; and it was ascertained that the fatal beam was made of this self-same tree.*

The people soon met again to erect the building, and the superstition of the day seemed to have some reasonable ground; for a new beam substituted in the place of the former, likewise fell. The house was, however, finally completed near the end of the year 1774, and dedicated Jan. 5, 1775, when Mr. Livermore preached a sermon from 1 Chron. xxix, 14: "But who am I and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things came of thee, and of thine own have we given them." In July 20, 1804, the house was struck with lightning, and the middle post at the east end rent from top to bottom, where it may now be seen clamped together by an iron bolt.

In former days, (to continue the history of the meeting-house,) before people had become so delicate and luxurious as now, there was no fire in the church in winter. How it might be with those of riper years I know not. I believe that the older men chose to have it understood that their zeal kept them warm; while the

* The event furnished a subject for one of our native poets. His somewhat antique melodies were rewarded with a household, domestic honor, to which many poets of greater note have never been able to attain. Long after the event and within the memory of many now living, they were familiarly sung by the young ladies of the town, as they carded and spun by their firesides. These memorable stanzas may be found in the Appendix.

young men, fearing perhaps lest their reputation for hardihood might suffer in the eyes of the gentler sex, would not confess that they were to be made to feel cold by any weather. But I can bear witness, that there were young lads, who, when the thermometer was at zero, by the middle of the afternoon sermon, were ready, after some misgiving, to give up reputation for zeal and pride of sex, for the chance of holding their fingers for a few moments over their mother's foot-stoves.

Fires were first introduced in December, 1822, and the belfry raised and bell hung in 1832.

The Universalists united together in 1812. The Baptist Church was organized April 7, 1817, and Society incorporated in 1818, and meeting-house erected in 1827. The second Congregational meeting-house was dedicated January 1, 1830. The Church was embodied June, 1823, and the Society formed under the general act of incorporation.

But this part of our Ecclesiastical history is too recent for me to dwell on. As illustrative, however, of the changes of the times, I may refer to one fact. When Mr. Beede was settled in 1803, there was not one dissenting voice in the town, not one who declined paying the minister's tax on any ground whatsoever. There was a singular harmony of religious views and feelings. All met in the same house to worship together the common Father of all. One of the results, which may deserve to be mentioned, of this harmony, was the comparatively light expense of maintaining public worship. At that time, besides what was derived from the ministerial fund, the whole amount assessed for the support of religious institutions was about two hundred and

sixty-five dollars a year. Now it amounts yearly to more than twelve hundred dollars. The number of inhabitants is very nearly the same now as then, while the tax for religious objects has increased about nine hundred and fifty dollars per annum.

At first sight one may be inclined to lament that the children have not been able to walk together in the same harmony as their fathers. But there are higher considerations than that of mere unity of opinion. It must be gratifying to every native of the place, as showing the general interest felt in religion, to witness the readiness with which this heavy tax is paid for the support of religious institutions, and the liberality which has characterized the town in all such matters. And it must also be gratifying, if men in their examinations do not arrive at the same views, that there are so many different churches, that every one may enjoy the privilege, which the Pilgrim Fathers came to New-England to secure, of worshipping God according to his own conscience. Nay, this separation may be merely temporary and only for the greater advantage of each and all. If the means of religion, which all possess, be faithfully used, there shall be a higher union. I observed as we walked towards the place where we are assembled, that two of the churches, (and I presume that it was only necessity that caused the other to be omitted,) though widely separated on the earth, were, above the earth, united—tower to tower—by a band wreathed with evergreen. So may we hope that many souls, that find it for their spiritual improvement to worship apart here, shall be united in eternal bands in heaven.

Another object of essential importance is that of schools. And I think we may look with pride to our

native town and see how willingly and well they have been supported. The school-tax, assessed by the town has always been more than was required by law, and of late years nearly double that amount. The sum required by law has been about three hundred dollars ; — whereas the sum actually raised, has never, for many years been less than four hundred — while of late years it has been five hundred, five hundred and fifty, and six hundred dollars per annum. Besides this should be reckoned in what has been raised for private and subscription schools ; and a much larger sum, — some years much more than all the rest, — which has been expended by young men and women in schools, academies and colleges abroad, where they have gone to seek further opportunities of education.

To this liberal support of schools and religious institutions, I think we may trace, in great measure, several very important results, such as a general intelligence and a taste for intellectual pleasures and pursuits, and the general good morals. It is not known, for example, that any native of Wilton has ever committed a crime which has subjected him to any of the severer penalties of the law.

To this may in part be attributed the small number of paupers compared with what is to be found in most towns of the same size ; so that if the people here have paid more for the support of schools and religion, they have thus prepared men better to provide for themselves, and have been obliged to pay less for the support of the poor.

It may be owing to this that Wilton has never been able to support a lawyer. The only one who ever attempted to settle in the town, I am told, was starved out in about three months.

Wilton, too, has furnished very much more than her proportion of professional men. Twenty-nine have received a college education. Thirteen of those born here have entered the ministry: eleven have become physicians, two of whom have been professors in medical colleges; and five have become lawyers. Were we to reckon the children of those who have emigrated from the town, this number would be very much increased. Besides this, are a very large number of school-teachers, than whose office none can be more important; and three have gone missionaries to heathen lands.

The great increase of the expenses of the town for schools and religious purposes has taken place, while other taxes have not diminished, and the population has not increased. Since 1790, when the number of inhabitants was one thousand one hundred and five, the population has been nearly stationary, and has never been greater than at that period.

The political history of the town is too important to be passed over entirely, though in referring to it, I would express no opinion as to the political questions that have been agitated.

The state of New-Hampshire during the revolutionary war was more free from toryism, than any state in the union. After the Revolution, the federal party was the dominant one, and New-Hampshire continued a federal state, unitedly, longer than any other, with the exception of Connecticut. Indeed, for fifteen years after the adoption of the Constitution in 1783, there was but one ticket in the state for United States and state officers. The republican party gained the ascendancy in 1805. Since then, at different times

the different parties have alternately had the majority. Wilton was a federal town, with the exception of two votes, till 1802. Since that time the democratic party has, I believe, been in the majority, in most cases, except when elections have been influenced by local interests. But on the subject of politics, so contested, and where one is so easily misunderstood, I do not dwell.

Wilton has of course sympathized with the general condition of the country. It has felt the blessings of peace, and war has brought mourning to the homes among these hills, as it has done elsewhere.

In the early settlement of the town, it shared, in common with all the frontier towns, the dread of Indian hostilities. It was, however, free from savage inroads, though for some years, in the time of Indian wars, the people took refuge for safety in neighboring garrisons.

In the French war, at the massacre of Fort Edward, Henry Parker, Jr., a young man whose family belonged to this town, was killed.

But a struggle was approaching which, for years, should be felt in every village and every home of this country. The causes which brought about the Revolution had for a long time been ripening. The country was heated and ready to burst out into a flame. The day of decision and action came. On the 19th of April, 1775, in all the towns in the neighborhood of Boston the same spectacle might have been witnessed, extending on into the country, as fast as men and horses could travel. A horseman might be seen to ride rapidly into the town. The bell, if there was one, was rung; a drum beat the roll; there was a sudden collecting of men from all

quarters — from the workshop and the field — and presently pushing their horses hotly on, the inhabitants dropped in one by one from the outskirts of the town. The house-doors were open; the ordinary avocations of life stopped; women were hurrying with uncovered heads, or whispering together with anxious eyes and quivering lips. Presently, three or four men on fresh horses were seen starting in the direction of the towns beyond, and the assembly quietly separated. In a few hours, the same men were seen rallying again. They were in their common dress, but they had fowling-pieces and muskets in their hands, and powder-horns and pouches, or cartridge-boxes slung at their sides. They came together with provisions and blankets — but silently, with stern and resolved faces, as if on some solemn and momentous enterprise, that had hushed all lighter feelings and words. What was the meaning of this rude war array? That courier had brought the news that a body of British troops was marching towards Concord for offensive purposes. And thus, at a moment's warning, in peace, almost unarmed, sprung forth the New England yeomanry to meet them. In each separate band was the strength of a separate town, men linked heart to heart; neighbors, brothers, sons, fathers. The plough was left in the furrow and the grain unsown. None but pale-lipped women and children crying they knew not why, and old men that leaned upon staves were left. Many tears were shed and many a prayer breathed, as wives, and mothers, and sisters saw this band, as it went with the expectation of instant combat, vanish in the windings of the road.*

* The same thing, almost to the letter, is described by the older inhabitants, as having taken place repeatedly during the war.

This was the most wonderful day of the Revolution. It witnessed the uprising of a whole people.* It was the day of decision, and each man who took arms in his hands, virtually cast off allegiance to the mother country, and personally declared war against the might of Britain. It was not as when an army, drilled into a piece of mechanism, marches forth to battle. The solemn decision of peace or war, that should drench the continent in blood, was to be made in each individual heart. At once the country was filled with armed men. Stark was in his saw-mill at Londonderry, when he heard the news of the blood shed at Lexington, and instantly took his musket and started for the camp. Putnam was ploughing in the middle of a field. He left his plough in the furrow, unyoked his oxen, and without changing his dress, mounted his horse and proceeded to the scene of action. And the same that they did, was done by multitudes of others. There are few of us, who have not heard from the aged people among us, accounts of the sudden preparation and departure of the minute men, and how their wives and sisters toiled at home with beating hearts, to prepare provisions and clothes to be sent to the camp. Forever in memory be held the brave men and heroic women of that day!†

* Very far, however, was it from being an act of hasty and inconsiderate passion. Many facts might be gleaned from the town records showing in what serious foresight the people were preparing for the Revolution. For example, in 1775, a "Town Stock" of salt and molasses was purchased at Marblehead and transported to Wilton, in the apprehension that the inhabitants might be cut off by the war from their supplies of these articles. The records of the time are also full of votes relative to providing clothes, provisions and money for those who joined the army.

† It is worthy of being mentioned, that the requisitions made on Wilton for men, throughout the war, were complied with invariably by prompt and *voluntary enlistments*. It is stated that in one case the demand came on Sunday, and

There was nothing peculiar in the history of Wilton during the Revolution. It endured deprivations and shared losses of substance and of men, in common with the other New-England towns. At one period or another, for a longer or a shorter time, nearly all the inhabitants, capable of bearing arms, were enrolled in the army; and every able bodied man served in the war, either personally or by substitute. Nearly the whole population turned out to meet Burgoyne, and many were with Stark at Bennington.* To show how heavily the war bore on all the towns, it may be stated that the population of Wilton, when the Revolution commenced, was but six hundred and twenty-three, of whom, there were but one hundred and twenty-eight between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Of this number, twenty-six were in the army in 1775. Of the soldiers from Wilton, twenty-two died or were killed in the war. Of the number who were out in that momentous struggle, but two remain. One † of them was out four years; the other ‡ during nearly the whole war, and on almost every battle-field where the great contest was

the men started for the camp on Monday. This is the more worthy of remembrance, because the want of prompt enlistments was one of the great difficulties of the Revolution. Washington constantly complains of the slow and incomplete returns of men. It does not diminish, but increases our respect for the patriotism of the town, that to encourage men to join the army, Wilton gave a large bounty to those who enlisted. To the last three-years men, this bounty was \$160 in silver to each man. For a fuller account of this measure, see the Appendix.

* An anecdote is related that shows the spirit that prevailed. A young man came to the muster-master, (Maj. Abiel Abbot,) to be enrolled for the army, but was found not so tall as the law required. He insisted on being again measured, and it being with the same result, in his passionate disappointment, he burst into tears. He was however finally enrolled, on the ground that zeal and courage were of more value in a soldier than an inch, more or less, in height.

† Capt. William Pettengill.

‡ Capt. Joseph Gray.

decided. They still remain, examples to all of patriotism and worth. May God hold their lives in his most holy care, and may their old age go down calmly amid the respect and honor of those, whose liberties they perilled their lives to secure.

When we compare the growth of our native town with that of places more favorably situated, it may seem at first slow and slight. Yet even here, how vast the change which a century has wrought. Instead of the Indian trail, or path marked by spotted trees, the whole town is intersected and netted over by travelled roads; instead of forests tenanted by bears and wolves, and every species of wild game, we now see on every side cultivated farms and happy homes; the streams then wandered through the wilderness unvisited, save by the muskrat or the beaver; and now scarcely a water-fall is to be found where is not erected a mill or factory. Through the warm summer days may be heard at the angles of the roads, the busy murmur of the school-houses, and on the hills may be seen the churches, directing the thoughts of the dwellers round about to heaven. At first the town was peopled by emigration; but it has given in this way more than it has received. Not only has it kept up its own population, but it is calculated that the emigrants from Wilton, now living, would make two towns, each as large as Wilton itself.* When we remember that this is the change wrought in a single century, and that this is but an example of the growth of the whole interior of New-England, we cannot fail to see that there has been and is abundant reason to be grateful to Providence for the wonderful prosperity of

* A large number of the original settlers of Andover, Weston and Landgrove, Vt., were emigrants from Wilton. So also were many of the first settlers of Nelson, N. H., and of Weld and Temple in Maine. This, however, includes but a small part of the emigration from this town.

our land. The wonder of today makes us forget the wonder of yesterday. It is but a little time since the population of this region was increasing scarcely less rapidly than that of the flourishing regions of the West in our own day. And it increases not so rapidly now, only because it is pouring forth its children to do their part in building up cities, and states, and empires towards the setting sun.

We have looked at the history of the Past. That we may draw from it, as far as may be, wisdom for the future, let us devote the remainder of our time to the consideration of some of the causes that have promoted the prosperity of our New-England towns.

One of the most important of these causes is to be found in the fact, that the people have been left to their individual enterprise.

There are two courses which a government may pursue, almost equally certain to ruin a country. One is that of too much legislation; the other is that of unsteady and changeable legislation. One is the characteristic vice of despotisms; the other has too often been chargeable upon republics. They both finally bring about the ruin of a country, in the same way, by breaking down and palsying individual enterprise.

In Egypt, the government does every thing; makes all the improvements; builds railroads and canals; owns and cultivates the soil. It takes the responsibility of every thing and directs every thing. Nothing is left to individual enterprise, and, of course, there is no such enterprise. The people remain slaves. Even were it well meant, there is such a thing as a government's taking so much care of a people, that they will cease to

take care of themselves, and sink down into apathy, and ignorance and sloth.

On the other hand, if legislation is changeable ; if it grants privileges to day which it revokes tomorrow ; passes laws this year only to repeal them the next ; gives encouragement to a branch of industry now, and suddenly and causelessly withdraws the encouragement ; the result will ultimately be the same. The insecurity of property will prevent men from investing it in any way in which the government can reach it ; the greatest encouragement to labor — the hope that one may lay up something for his old age or for his children, — will be taken away ; no man will be induced to make improvements, if he is to be immediately after treated as a public enemy, and robbed of all the profit of his labors ; industry will be paralyzed ; they who have much will hoard it, and they who have nothing will live on the community ; all enterprise will be extinct ; and thus the changeable legislation of a republic may become as ruinous as the tyrannical exactions of a despotism. Thus far our country has avoided both of these extremes. It has interfered as little as possible to regulate and control individual industry, endeavoring in the main to secure to each one the profits of his own capital and labor. Give a people freedom, and make them certain that they shall have the benefit of all the property and labor they invest in any branch of business ; that government shall not rob them of it, but secure it to them and their children ; and the spirit of enterprise will spring into life and vigor, and every faculty of mind will be called into action, every hand will be busy, and the land will be covered with improvements and with a prosperous and growing people. Such has been thus far, and may such ever be, the condition of our country.

2. Another great cause of the prosperity of our New-England towns, may be found in the character of the town governments. We are apt to forget the importance of the town governments. In them nearly all of the most important legislation of the country takes place. Schools, religious institutions, roads, the poor, all that most immediately concerns the character and substantial comfort of the people, depend on the action of the town for support. The action of the general government is almost limited to the power of doing or averting evil. The towns nearly monopolize the power of doing good.

And not only this, the system of town governments exert the same influence on the character, spoken of under the preceding head. It calls on each individual for thought and action, and makes him responsible in all the most important measures of government. Our town-meetings do scarcely less towards disciplining men to self-government, to wise forethought and expanded views and action, than our schools do in developing the minds of children. They are the schools of a republic; in which the citizens learn self-government. There, annually, all affairs of a local nature are entirely determined; and all the great measures of the general government are brought up for consideration, and each individual must do his part in deciding on what involves the welfare of millions. Familiarity renders us insensible to the advantage of these town governments. We can only see it by contrasting it with what our condition would be were these corporations annihilated. Were the taxes necessary for the support of the poor, of schools, of religious institutions, for the construction of roads, and other objects, raised by the general government from

customs or from a general tax, and expended by the government, the good done would be slight compared with what we witness now. Money thus raised would be expended heedlessly and unprofitably. Money raised without forethought on the part of the people would be expended without after-thought. But let the people themselves raise the money for schools, and they will see that their schools are good and well attended. Let the people tax themselves for roads, and roads will be constructed faithfully. Everything in the comparison will be done to the best advantage, for every one's attention will be awake to see that it is so done. Men are satisfied too, with taxes raised by themselves. A tax of a few pence a pound on tea, if exacted by a foreign power, may excite a revolution; while the same people may cheerfully burden themselves with a tax of millions, to accomplish measures which they themselves approve.

But far more than this. It gives each individual the habit of looking beyond himself, his home, and farm, and workshop. It binds him in with the community. It cultivates unconsciously the habit of deliberation, of forethought, of wide and liberal views. An intelligent German remarks, that what he was most struck with in this country, was the early developement of mind and character, so that a youth of sixteen is often more competent to enter into the business of life, than a German of twenty-five. And it is accounted for by the constant tendency of our institutions to throw important trusts and responsibilities on every individual.

But more than all; in these town governments the citizens learn that without which a republic cannot long exist,—the habit of self-government. A republic cannot be governed by the bayonet. The real law, the real government, must be in the mind of each individual

citizen. The statute book but records the way in which the people have determined to govern themselves.

The worth of this habit of self-government was signally seen at the commencement of our Revolution. Then the laws of the land were virtually set aside. The general government was entirely cast off. Courts of law and the bench of justice were swept away. The people were thrown back upon themselves, and almost all the affairs of the country were transacted through their primary assemblies in the towns. Then was seen the wonderful spectacle of a people without law, amongst whom all the processes of government, at a most fearful crisis, were carried on as quietly, as steadily, as in the most peaceful times and under the strongest despotism of Europe. The people had the habit of self-government; the habit of considering, and in great measure deciding for themselves on the most important general interests. And though law was gone, the sense of individual responsibility remained, and the habit of self-rule remained. A very striking illustration of the importance of this habit of self-government is afforded by an event that occurred on the first news of the breaking out of the Revolution. The warrants for town-meeting down to the time of the Lexington battle, were uniformly issued in his Majesty's name. For example, the last one before that conflict reads in this manner. "To Amos Fuller, constable for the town of Wilton, Greeting —

"In his Majesty's name, you are hereby required forthwith to warn all the Freeholders and other inhabitants, &c. &c.

"Given under our hands and seal this 21st day of March, A. D. 1775, and in the 15th year of the Reign

of King George the Third ;” and this signed by the Selectmen of Wilton.

But little more than a month passed during which the battle of Lexington took place, and the form changes. His Majesty’s name no longer holds the place of authority. That place is occupied thenceforth by “us the subscribers.” And no allegiance is recognised to any power beyond the town itself, as the following warrant issued five days after that event, which, with the doings thereon, virtually constituted, as is justly remarked by the gentleman to whom I am indebted for the anecdote, the town of Wilton a Republic. The warrant now reads, “To Amos Fuller, constable for the town of Wilton, Greeting,—by us the subscribers, you are hereby required forthwith to warn, &c.” The second article of the warrant runs thus:—

“Whereas, it appears at this time that our public affairs are in so distressing a situation, that we are not in a capacity to proceed in a legal manner, to see if the town will vote, that the votes and resolves of this and all other meetings in this town for the term of one year, shall be binding on the inhabitants of this town, &c.”

This was signed by the Selectmen for the year. The meeting was held, and the vote was passed, that the votes and resolves of this and all other town-meetings, should be held binding. Thus, practically, all other authority was rejected, and the town of Wilton became a separate sovereignty, a republic, acknowledging no laws but those of its own making. This vote, five days after the battle of Lexington, was, in truth, a declaration of independence, and perhaps the first ever made.

It was this power of self-government which gave strength and union to the people, throughout the

Revolution. It was owing to this, that war and the vehemence of party spirit, and the breaking up of established institutions, hardly deranged the interior order of the country. It was owing to a want of them, — to the want of the habit of self-government, — that in the French Revolution, the people, when the ancient monarchy was removed, knew not what to do. They only knew that they were free; and, like tigers let loose from their cage, rushed madly upon their prey, and made liberty the watchword for licentiousness, and rapine, and blood.

3. Another cause that has promoted the prosperity of New-England, has been the character of its soil. One travels over the prairies of the West, and it seems as if there must be the garden and paradise of the world. To one who passes through New-England, and compares it with many other regions, it appears as if its soil had been smitten with the curse of barrenness. He travels for hours and sees only naked hills, walled in and almost covered with rocks, and the few patches of fertile soil, the result of unwearied labor. He sees the snows lingering under the shadow of the mountains to chill the summer; and the summer has hardly gone when they appear again. Six months of the year are exhausted in preparing for the rigors of the remaining six. Men must labor or starve. There is no exemption. How strange, it is sometimes said, that the Pilgrims should have cast their lot on these wintry shores. How much happier, had their ship borne them to some more benignant clime!

But, could they have looked into the future, might they not have wisely chosen this region in preference to all others? Though the soil be not so productive of

corn and wheat, may it not for that very reason be more fitted to produce men ?

The necessity of labor begets the habit of industry. And what men labor for gains value, and labor itself is not willingly thrown away; and thus forethought and self-denial, (the foundations of mental and moral growth,) are nurtured up, and all of manhood that is in the man, is brought out by the necessities of his condition. And the result is, that the traveller sees on all this desolate land, ten thousand homes filled with the comforts and luxuries of life, far beyond most other regions; school-houses at every turn, to which young children come up with shining, morning faces; and, towering above the hills, the spires of churches, catching the earliest beams of the morning and the last rays of the evening sun. Amidst this desolation of nature, man has found happiness and abundance; and he has found it all the more certainly, because the necessities of his condition are such as to call out all manly qualities; and where these exists, little else will be wanting. That region where mind and character have been nurtured up into vigor, shall make all others tributary to itself.

Change the scene. Suppose that, by some necromancy, the soil were to become suddenly fertile, that the heavens should stoop nearer the earth, and the winters be melted away under a milder sky; suppose that by three days' labor men might gain food for the week. The whole history of man tells us that the vast proportion would labor but three days in the six; the rest would be given up to idleness, and with idleness would come its dissipations and its vices. A few, possessed of the strongest minds and characters might acquire vast wealth; but the broad land, instead of being filled with

competence and covered with cheerful homes; in which youth learns from age the best virtues of men, would be deformed by miserable hovels. The poorest countries in the world — those in which the mass of the people are sunk in the lowest poverty — are those whose soil is most fertile. The fertility of the soil has operated as a premium on sloth and vice.

It is not the soil that makes a nation flourish, but the men, — their forethought, and enterprise, and industry. And these have rarely existed when there has not been a necessity for them. At any rate, I may say that no land has been permanently and progressively prosperous, in which the people have not been under the necessity of being steadily industrious. And I might say more, that many a man who has gone forth to find a home in distant lands, in counting over his blessings, puts among the first, the fact, that he was born among the bleak hills of New-England and subjected in early childhood to the imperious necessity of daily labor and self-denial.

But there are other causes of prosperity for which we owe a more immediate gratitude to the wisdom of our fathers.

One of them is the School system, which was early established, and which has been always fostered as one of the most valuable of our institutions. That a country may flourish, it is not enough that the hand should toil. The mind must direct the hand. Other things being equal, that country will always be the most prosperous, where there is the most intelligence. Our fathers saw that no money is so wisely invested, as that which is invested in the education of the young. Drought may blast the harvest, fires consume the dwelling, and the hoarded wealth be swept away, but intelli-

gence shall collect, and restore, and rebuild all again. Amongst an ignorant people, all the arts and employments of life languish. To such a people all soils are barren and all skies unpropitious. Nature may do everything, but ignorance cannot use her gifts. But where there is intelligence, every thing may be made to contribute to the general prosperity. The rapids of the river, shall move the myriad wheels of industry, and the very granite of the hills, shall be as mines of gold. There is not a mountain so bleak, nor a valley so lonely, where intelligent enterprise shall not find abundance. Every harbor shall be white with sails, and the rock-bound coast be lined with shining towns. It is because intelligence has guided labor in New-England, that prosperity has filled her borders.

Nor is the influence of this early and careful education of the young seen at home alone. Wherever you go, along the mighty rivers and broad savannahs of the West and South, you see New-England names. And wherever her sons are planted, there are prosperous and thriving communities.

But especially have we reason to be grateful to our fathers for the habitual reverence which they instilled into the minds of their descendants, by their own example and by the institutions which they established for religion. The early settlers of this town brought with them much of that fervent and stern religious feeling, which characterized the pilgrim fathers. One of the first things which they did, was to erect a place for public worship. They had public worship almost from the outset, and a minister was settled when the town contained but about forty families. "And here," says Mr. Fiske, in his half century sermon; "it is worthy of remark that

notwithstanding the number of inhabitants was so small and their circumstances far from being affluent, the expense which arose from this quarter, was so far from impoverishing the town, that the interest of the town was doubled in a few years. It was the means of a more rapid settlement of the place." This remark is very just and important. He who removes with a family to a new region, among the first questions, asks, what is the condition of the schools, and what are the religious privileges. Close the churches of a town, and you will diminish the value of every farm; — for the best purchasers are likely to seek a better place for the home of their families.

It was not, however, such considerations as these that caused the early settlers to make such efforts to support the institutions of religion; — but rather their strong sense of duty, their deep religious feeling, and the conviction of the infinite importance of religion to the human soul. Nor was their religion confined to the Church. It controlled all the employments of life; and most of all shone with steady light in their homes. There were few families where the voice of morning and evening prayer was not heard; and the religious education of the young was esteemed the first and most important duty.

It is to this almost universal religious education of the young, — may it never be neglected! — to which, more than to any other single thing, the welfare of New-England may be traced. The ultimate prosperity of individuals and communities rests on character. This is the basis of rock, which, though waves beat and storms blow and rains fall, is unmoved; — and the character of a people depends on early education.

It is to be feared that it is hardly enough considered, how the welfare of a community depends on the virtues cherished in the homes of that community. These retired, unostentatious virtues—the religious faith and principle fostered in the church and the home,—are the strong foundations on which the state reposes. They form the solid masonry below, on which pillar and dome are built above. Remove these private, unobserved virtues, and the fabric of the mightiest kingdom, will be shattered from the corner to the keystone. The strength of states, depends not on overflowing treasuries, nor on navies that sweep the seas, nor on fortresses that frown over the entrances of their harbors, but on the virtues planted in the hearts of the young, and nurtured in the bosoms of the old. Point out a people, where the parents live and children grow up in the fear and the love of God, and that people is a mighty people. The nations of the earth may come up against it, but they will be scattered before its invincible strength, as waves are scattered that dash on a coast of rock. Every house in such a nation is a fortress, and every heart, a living bulwark. Men grow strong, standing by the hearthstones consecrated by their father's virtues, and their mother's prayers. The defenders of freedom, driven from every other refuge, have taken their last stand, to die by the altars where their fathers have worshipped. The prayer of the feeble mother, with which she baptizes her child's soul, as it lies in the cradle— if she be but faithful to her prayer in the education of her child— may in time become mightier than the sword of kings. The first great lesson of history, which he who has not learned has read history in vain, is, how paltry, temporary, evanescent, is that national prosperity, which is not

based on the virtues of the people ; and how insecure and transient those virtues are, unless sustained by the life-giving power of religion.

But I dwell too long on these topics. In concluding, however, the history of our native town, we can hardly fail of calling to mind the many changes which it has witnessed. The past century has been a most eventful one. It might seem indeed that if there were peace anywhere, it might be amidst the quiet of these scenes. But no place can be dismembered from the rest of the world ; and this place has sympathized with and felt the influence of all the changes, that have gone on around it. Within the last hundred years, four wars have sent their drums and trumpets to disturb the echoes of these hills. Within that time the Indians, who then hunted and fished along all our streams, have disappeared. Again and again, the government has changed. The first portion of Wilton was granted by Massachusetts. The remainder was granted by the Masonian Proprietors, who held under the Council of New-England, who themselves held under James the First of England. Then came the Colonial government ; which in turn was swept away before the storm of the Revolution. A century ago, the authority of the monarch of France was recognised throughout almost the whole length of the continent. His forts extended from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, upward along the lakes, and beside the great rivers of the west, and down to the mouth of the Mississippi. There were in the Mississippi Valley alone, in garrisons and forts, nearly two thousand French soldiers. And this power continued, till, like the key-stone struck from an arch, it was broken up by Wolf on the heights of Abraham. The Spanish dominion has shrunk and

withered away. And the flag of England, instead of overshadowing the coast, floats only on the uncertain winds of the North. In the meantime, in the midst of these external changes, this great inland empire has grown up, silently, swiftly, while men slept, amid the shadows of the wilderness; like the coral walls of the Indian seas, expanding, rising to the ocean's surface, the basis of a continent. And these events have been the subjects of conversation at the fireside, and have filled with fear, anxiety, or rejoicing, the hearts of the generations among whom they took place.

But there have been changes more felt than these. The first settlers have of course all gone, and of the generation that succeeded them, scarce any remain. And this great work of change, this coming and departure, has gone and still goes on around us. In every house has been transacted its history of sorrow and joy. Thanksgivings have gone up from the lips of parents that a living child was born. Here have the glowing features and opening minds of childhood been watched. Here have affections, stronger than the grave, bound together the hearts of the young. Here the sick-lamp has burnt, and watchers through the long night have tenderly smoothed the pillow and moistened the parched lips. Here prayers have ascended from beside the domestic altar, and parents invoked the blessing of God on those who still remained beneath their roof, and on their children who wandered far away. And death hath been here, and with every instance of mortality has been the sundering of human ties, the shedding of tears, and the bitter grief of stricken hearts. And here I may be permitted to refer to one, who was the personal friend of nearly all present, and was to me from

early childhood scarcely less than a parent. He was expected to have addressed you on this occasion, to which he looked forward with the greatest interest. He was snatched away by a sudden and fearful death ; but his unpretending virtues, his life of active usefulness, his peaceful spirit, and his example of fervent and consistent piety, will long be held in memory. They were not consumed in the flames that consumed the body, but live and will live as silent monitors to all who survive him. And not he alone has gone. There are few who hear me who have not themselves sate by the dying beds of those dear to them, and closed their eyes, and followed them with the sad procession of mourners, to their last resting-place. What a history of change and sorrow may be read by him who passes through the grave-yard, knowing who sleep beneath the narrow mounds beside him. There lie the fathers ; — there lie kindred and neighbors and friends. If this were all, how desolate the scene ! But thanks unto God, it is not all. As the Christian stands by these silent graves, a still, small voice, the voice of the revelation of the Son of God, speaks to his soul the divine assurance — these dead shall live. The stone shall be rolled from the sepulchre, the earth give up its trust, and the buried generations be clothed with life immortal.

Through these changes we too must pass. The fathers are gone and we have entered into their labors. The blessings that we have inherited we but hold in trust, to transmit, after we have enjoyed them, to our descendants. May this generation have no reason to blush for its unworthiness. If the instructions of those who have gone before be followed, here will intelligence and virtue abound, and the fear of God and the love of

man be seen. Here shall multitudes be prepared to go forth to fill places of usefulness in the world. And when in God's good time, those now on the scene shall be called hence, we may hope that it shall be to join the great assemblage of the good and holy, in a higher world.

NOTE.—I would express my thanks to the Committee of Arrangements, for the aid which I have received from them. Whatever value and interest this pamphlet may have, is owing among others, especially to Jonathan Livermore Esq., and Mr. Abiel Abbot. With great expense of time and labor, and with great care to be accurate in the account of facts, they have collected and put into my hands the materials that I have used. They have left to me scarcely more than the pleasant and easy office of arranging them. Without the assistance of Mr. Livermore, whose surprisingly minute and accurate information as to the history of the town, embraces probably every event of any interest, this Address could not have been written.

APPENDIX.

As this may be the only account of Wilton published before the next Centennial Celebration, it has been deemed proper to introduce into it whatever might be of any interest, not only to the present inhabitants of the town, but also to their descendants. To our children, those engaged in this celebration may say, — we have thought that no incidents which could illustrate the history and progress of the town and the fortunes of its people would be uninteresting. While we gratefully commemorate the virtues of the fathers who have gone before us, it gives us additional pleasure that in doing this, we may also hand down the record of their struggles and virtues to those who shall come after us. It is pleasant for us to believe that they will value the good institutions of the town the more, when they see with what care and at the cost of what sacrifices they were established. We have dwelt on many minute circumstances; because they are already rapidly fading from the memory, and would soon be lost, unless gathered up and recorded.

ORIGINAL PURCHASERS.

We publish a schedule of the lots drawn by the original purchasers of Wilton. We have thought it might be a matter of general interest and perhaps advantage, inasmuch as the present owners of the soil, hold their titles from the original purchasers. This schedule was prepared with much labor and care by the late Samuel Abbot, Esq.

The first settlement, in 1739, has already been spoken of. The number of inhabitants, however, increased but slowly till 1749, when

a Company purchased (with the exception of a few farms previously taken up) the township of Wilton, of the heirs of John Tufton Mason. Very few of these purchasers ever resided in Wilton, but of them the original settlers, after 1749, purchased their land. As will be seen in the schedule, the heirs of Mason, — the grantors of the township — formed a part of this Company. It may be added that a share consisted of 240 acres, containing three lots of 80 acres each.

Extract from the Deed making the Grant of the Township of Wilton by the Masonian Proprietors.

Pursuant to the Power and Authority granted and vested in me by the Proprietors of Lands purchased of John Tufton Mason Esq, in the Province of New Hampshire by their vote Passed at their meeting held at Portsmouth in said Province the 16th day of June 1749 I do by these presents on the terms and conditions hereafter expressed give and grant unto Thomas Read, Esq. Robert Fletcher Junr Joseph Blanchard Junr, Oliver Coleburn, Oliver Farwell, Jno. Usher, Thomas Spaulding, John Lovewell Junr, Peter Powers, Humphrey Hobbs, John Combs, Jos. Blodget, Samuel Fowle, Josiah Swan, Ezra Carpenter, Jona. Cummings, Thomas Parker Junr, John Varnum, William Foster, the Rev. Mr. Thomas Parker, Josiah Butterfield, Anthony Emory, Benj. Parker Junr, Nehemiah Abbot, Samuel Greele, Benjn. Farwell, Oliver Whiting, Jos. Richardson, Benjn. Farley, Jno. Kendall, Abraham Kendall, David Adams, Joseph French, Eleazer Blanchard, Zacheus Lovewell, Samuel Farley, William Cummings, Jona. Powers, Samuel Cummings, Archelaus Dale, Jacob Putnam, Nathl. Putnam, John Dale, Stephen Herryman, John Shead and Ephraim Putnam, all the right title and property of the Grantors aforesaid of in and to all that part of a township or tract of land in the Province of New Hampshire aforesaid containing five miles square Lying on the branches of Souhegan river between Peterborough and Munson bounded as follows, Beginning at the South-west corner of the premises at a white pine tree, which is the North-west corner of the Township No 1 and runs from thence five miles to a white ash marked, from thence east five miles to a stake and stones from thence South five miles to a Chestnut tree marked, from thence

west five miles to the white pine tree first mentioned which s'd Township is Lay'd out, drawn for and the lotts ascertained to each Grantee respectively also two lotts for encouragement for building Mills and three shares for public uses viz. one for the first settled minister, one for the Ministry and one for the school.

In witness whereof I the Subscriber Joseph Blanchard of Dunstable have hereunto set my hand and seal this first day of October 1749.

JOSEPH BLANCHARD.

The schedule of the lots drawn is certified thus :

"The afore-written lists were drawn and finished at Dunstable, the 16th day of October 1749.

Copy examined for

Jos. BLANCHARD, *Prs. Clerk.*"

SCHEDULE OF LOTS DRAWN.

Township No. 2.	Draught						Draught								
	No.	Range.	No.	R.	No.		No.	R.	No.	R.					
Robert Fletcher, Jr.	1	9	4	9	3	11	4	Nehemiah Abbot	43	13	9	3	1	16	1
Joseph Blanchard, Jr.	2	8	4	8	3	20	2	Samuel Greele	45	9	8	9	9	8	7
Oliver Colburn	3	10	6	1	10	16	3	Benjamin Farwell	46	16	9	9	6	19	9
Minister	6	12	7	17	10	20	4	Oliver Whiting	47	6	4	7	4	7	3
Oliver Farwell	7	11	5	2	7	1	2	Joseph Richardson	48	17	5	16	5		
John Usber	8	6	5	6	6	1	1	Benjamin Farley	50	19	8	18	6		
Thomas Spalding	9	18	1	13	1	14	1	Joseph Blodgett	51	16	7	13	5		
John Lovewell, Jr.	10	8	6	2	10	1	5	John Kendall	52	5	9	6	8	14	5
Peter Powers	12	13	7	16	10	20	1	Abraham Kendall	53	9	5				
Humphrey Hobbs	14	4	4	6	3	10	2	Peter Powers	55	16	4	18	4	15	3
John Combs	16	4	3	8	2	9	2	David Adams	56	17	1				
Joseph Blodgett	17	5	5	5	6	3	7	Joseph French	57	4	7	5	7	6	10
Samuel Fowle	19	13	3	13	2	12	10	Eleazer Blanchard	60	1	6	1	9	1	6
Josiah Swan	20	13	6	10	10	11	10	Robert Fletcher, Jr.	61	18	2	19	2	19	1
Ezra Carpenter	22	12	6	17	3	15	1	Zacheus Lovewell	62	20	10	10	5	7	9
Jonathan Cumings	23	3	2	4	2	11	3	Samuel Farley	63	20	9	11	7	11	9
Thomas Parker, Jr.	24	3	3	12	2	7	2	William Cumings	64	2	2	4	1	5	1
John Varnum	25	3	4	1	3	2	5	Jonathan Powers	65	2	3	2	4	2	1
Pet. Powers & A. Dale	27	7	8	7	7	7	1	Samuel Cumings	66	6	2	5	2	6	1
Ministry	28	17	2	8	8	9	1	Nathaniel Putnam	72	16	3				
Thomas Read, Esq.	30	11	1	19	4	19	3	Mill Lots	67	13	4	14	4		
William Foster	32	7	10	20	8	10	7	John Dale	68	16	2	21	2		
Mr. Thomas Parker	34	18	17	19	7	18	3	Jacob Putnam	69	15	5	18	5		
Josiah Butterfield	35	17	7	14	2	17	6	Stephen Herryman	70	17	4	15	4		
Anthony Emory	36	15	2	2	3	3	8	Archelaus Dale	71	16	6				
Benj. Parker, Jr.	40	11	8	10	8	13	10	John Shead	49	14	6	15	6		
Peter Powers	41	13	8	14	8	20	6	Ephraim Putnam	73	15	5				
School lots	42	12	9	10	9	10	1								

Note. — Third column of figures, 6th line from bottom, 17th range, is a mistake for 7th.

The foregoing lots were drawn by the Grantees ; those that follow were drawn by the Grantors, the respective lots of each entered against his name.

	Draught					
	No.	R.	No.	R.	No.	R.
Thomas Parker, Esq.	4	9	5	8	10	9
M. H. Wentworth, Esq.	5	7	5	8	5	1
Jotham Odiorne, Esq.	11	12	4	12	3	12
Joseph Blanchard, Esq.	13	5	4	10	3	4
Thomas Wallingford, Esq.	15	5	3	11	2	7
Joshua Pierce, Esq.	18	4	5	4	6	1
William Parker, Esq.	21	12	5	19	10	18
John Wentworth, Jr.	26	3	5	2	6	3
John Moffatt, Esq.	29	5	8	6	7	8
Nathaniel Meserve and others	31	18	9	17	9	20
*Daniel Pierse and Mary Moore	37	2	9	3	9	3
Matthew Livermore, Esq.	38	4	9	4	10	5
Richard Wibird, Esq.	39	12	8	15	8	16
Theodore Atkinson, Esq.	44	14	9	14	10	20
John Tufton Mason, Esq.	54	14	7	15	7	14
Mark H. Wentworth, Esq.	58	15	9	15	10	20
S. Solly and C. March, Esq.	59	6	9	8	9	19
*George Jaffrey, Esq.	33	18	8	17	8	9

The Charter incorporating the town of Wilton is under the hand of B. Wentworth, Governor of N. H., and dated the 2d day of January, A. D. 1765.

REVOLUTIONARY TIMES.

The town papers relating to the affairs of Wilton during the war of the Revolution, have unfortunately in great part been lost by neglect or destroyed. The papers that remain have been carefully examined, and the more interesting facts contained in them incorporated with such other information as we have been able to procure.

Our notices of what was done, and especially as regards the expenditures occasioned by the war, are very imperfect, but they will serve to show the spirit that animated the town.

Nearly every able-bodied man belonging to Wilton, was out in the war, and every man in the town either did service personally, or hired another to fill his place for a longer or shorter period. Wilton was represented in the battle of Bunker Hill, and a large number of the

able-bodied men were in the army at Cambridge. It is known that at least eight, and probably more, were in the battle of Bennington, one of whom, Ebenezer Perry, was killed. Eleven of those that were lost, died in the campaign of 1776 in the North-western Army. Two died in New York about the time of the battle of White Plains, and two at Valley Forge. Others were wounded, but it is not known that more than one was killed in battle.

We are indebted to Col. Jonathan Burton for accounts (found among the papers of his father, who was one of the selectmen of Wilton during four years of the war) of the money paid on several occasions to soldiers from this town. The first is a receipt. It is as follows:—

WILTON, MARCH 19, 1777.

“We, the subscribers, do each one for himself acknowledge that we have received of Capt. William Barron, by the hand of Jonathan Burton, the whole of arrears of all kinds for our services as soldiers in the continental army in the year 1776, in Col. Wyman's Regiment. We say received by us.”*

The next account, is one “of money paid to soldiers in the continental army by the town of Wilton in the year 1777.” This money was paid for prior services, and was paid early in the year 1777. The whole amount paid to fourteen persons at this time was £396 10s. Three others received at a later date, a proportionate compensation.

We have next “the account of the bounties given by the town of Wilton, to the first three-years' men who engaged in the Continental army for said tour.” The number of men was fourteen, and the sum they received as bounty from the town, was £273 5s.

The second three-years' men left for the army in March, 1781. In order to encourage men to volunteer, the town gave a bounty to every one who enlisted. This bounty was more than equivalent to what a laboring man would have received, had he remained at home to work on a farm. On account of the great depreciation of the currency, it was deemed more just to the soldiers and for the town, to pay this bounty in something not subject to such diminution in value as

* This receipt is signed by the following persons:—Ephraim Baker, Abijah Perry, Jacob Putnam, Administrator, Richard Whitney, William Parkhurst, Archelaus Keney, Asa Peirce, Phineas Farington, Isaac Peabody, Abraham Burton, Archelaus Putnam, Phebe Parker for her husband who died, Theodore Stevens, Henry Stevens.

the continental money. This bounty was entirely independent of the regular pay which they received. It was agreed that each man should receive 20 head of cattle to be as many months old as they should serve months in the army. A bond given to one of them will be seen in the note.* All of the last three-years' men returned, and as it was more agreeable to them, the town entered into an arrangement with them by which the cattle were to be estimated at \$8 per head; thus making for the three years \$160 to each man, in addition to the continental pay. The town likewise made up to them their personal expenses for clothing. The sum paid instead of the cattle was \$1280.

In 1777 Ichabod Perry enlisted for *during the war*.

The first three-years' men, who enlisted in 1777, were Humphrey Cram, David Hazleton, William Burton, Asa Lewis, Uriah Ballard,

* Know all men by these presents, that we, Philip Putnam, Nathan Ballard, Jonathan Burton, and Abner Stiles, gentlemen; Jonathan Martin, William Abbot, and Richard Whitney, selectmen for the town of Wilton, being jointly chosen a committee, by said town, for procuring and hiring Continental soldiers for said town, for the term of three years, do hereby stand firmly bound and obliged to Asa Reddington, of Wilton, aforesaid, his Heirs, Executors, and Administrators, and Assignees, forever, in the sum of Four Hundred Spanish milled dollars, equal to one hundred and twenty Pounds of Lawful Silver money, to be paid to the said Asa Reddington, his heirs, &c., within three years from the date hereof.

The condition of this present obligation is such, that if the above-named Philip Putnam, Nathan Ballard, Jonathan Burton, Abner Stiles, Jonathan Martin, William Abbot, and Richard Whitney, being a committee, chosen by the town abovesaid, in their capacity or either of them, shall procure and deliver unto the abovesaid Asa Reddington, twenty neat cattle of a middling size as an encouragement to the said Reddington serving as a Continental soldier for the term of three years, if not sooner discharged, and the said Reddington is to receive the cattle at as many months old as he doth months service in the army.

And furthermore, the Committee engages, that if the said Reddington doth not receive his clothing of the Regimental Paymaster, according to the order of this State, by the said Reddington bringing a certificate from the Paymaster to us, we will make good the said clothing; and at the delivery of the cattle, if the said Reddington is dissatisfied as to the value of them, we oblige ourselves in our capacity to leave the same to any disinterested person.

And if this obligation is fulfilled in manner and form, above-mentioned unto the said Reddington, then this present obligation to be void and of none effect; otherwise to remain in full force and virtue. Signed, sealed and delivered,
This fourteenth day of March, 1781. In pre- { *Here follow the signatures*
sence of us, { *of the Committee.*

JAMES DASCOME,
WILLIAM BROWN

Joseph Gray, Christopher Martin, Nehemiah Holt, Amos Holt, William Pettengill, Wm. A. Hawkins.

The last three-years' men were, Joseph Gray, Israel How, Uriah Ballard, Timothy Abbot, John Greele, Benjamin Pierce, Daniel Holt, Joel Holt, Asa Reddington, Daniel Barker.

The following men served in 1776:— Samuel Pettengill, Lieut. Benjamin Pettengill, Nurss Sawyer, Solomon Holt, Caleb Putnam, Peter Putnam, Josiah Parker, Christopher Martin, Uriah Ballard, Nehemiah Holt, Wm. A. Hawkins, promoted to be Captain, May 22, 1779.

Many others were out, among whom was Isaac Fry, who served through the whole war, and at its close returned with the brevet rank of Major.

The three-years' men from Wilton were engaged in 1777, on Hudson river, against Burgoyne, in the affairs of the 19th September and 7th of October. They were also, in 1779, with Sullivan, in the Indian country.

The following are the names of those who died in the Revolutionary service:—

William Burton died at Valley-Forge Spring, 1778; Asa Cram, Jonathan Gray, Jeremiah Holt, Amos Holt, Solomon Holt, James Holden, August 29th, 1776; John Honey, October 24th, 1776; James Hutchinson, Joseph Lewis, at Valley-Forge; Lieut. Samuel Pettengill, 1776; Benjamin Pettengill, his son, 1776; Ebenezer Perry, 2d, Ebenezer Perry, Jonas Perry, Caleb Putnam, August 22d, 1776; Peter Putnam, Josiah Parker, October 22d, 1776; Asa Pierce, Isaac Russell, September 15th, 1776; Nurss Sawyer, Archilaus Wilkins, Jr.

The following is the Covenant of Non-Importation and Non-Consumption of Goods from Great Britain. [See Records of Wilton for July 15 and September 8, 1774.]

We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the town of Wilton, having taken into our serious consideration the precarious state of the liberties of North America, and more especially the present distressed condition of our sister colony of the Massachusetts Bay, embarrassed as it is, by several Acts of the British Parliament, tending to the entire subversion of their natural and charter rights, among which is the act for blocking up the harbor of Boston; and being fully sensible of our indispensable duty to lay hold on every means in our power to

preserve and recover the injured Constitution of our country; and conscious at the same time of no alternative between the horrors of slavery or the carnage and desolation of civil war, but a suspension of all commercial intercourse with the Island of Great Britain; do, in the presence of God, solemnly and in good faith, covenant and engage with each other:—

1. That, from henceforth, we will suspend all commercial intercourse with the said Island of Great Britain, until the Parliament shall cease to enact laws imposing taxes on the colonies without their consent, and until the pretended right of taxing is dropped, and Boston Port opened, and their and our constitutional rights and privilèges are restored.

2. That there may be less temptation to others to continue in the said now dangerous commerce, and in order to promote industry, economy, arts and manufactures, among ourselves, which are of the last importance to the welfare and well-being of a community; we do in like manner solemnly covenant, That we will not buy, purchase, or consume, or suffer any person by, for, or under us, to purchase; nor will we use in our families, in any manner whatever, any goods, wares, or merchandize, which shall arrive in America from Great Britain, aforesaid, from and after the last day of August, 1774, (except only such articles as shall be judged absolutely necessary by a majority of the signers hereof,) and, as much as in us lies, to prevent our being interrupted and defeated in this only peaceable measure entered into for the recovery and preservation of our rights and the rights of our brethren in our sister Colonies, we agree to break off all trade and commerce with all persons who, preferring their private interests to the salvation of their now almost perishing country, shall still continue to import goods from Great Britain, or shall purchase of those who import after the said last day of August, until the aforesaid pretended right of taxing the Colonies, shall be given up or dropped, (except so much as christian duties require).

3. As a refusal to come into this or a similar agreement, which promises deliverance of our country from the calamities it now feels, and which, like a torrent, are rushing upon it with increasing violence, must, in our opinion, evidence a disposition inimical to, or criminally negligent of, the common safety; it is agreed, that all such ought to be considered, and shall by us be esteemed, as encouragers of contumacious importers.

4. We hereby further engage, that we will use all reasonable methods, to encourage and promote the production of manufactures among ourselves, that this covenant and engagement may be as little detrimental to ourselves and our fellow-countrymen as possible.

Lastly,— We allow ourselves liberty to comply with the result of the General Congress at Philadelphia. Also, we agree to make such alterations in this Covenant as shall be thought suitable by the majority of signers, after notice given in a public manner by a committee chosen for that purpose, which notice shall be eight days before the meeting.

ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS.

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH in Wilton was embodied and the first Pastor, Rev. Jonathan Livermore, ordained, Dec. 14, 1763. From Jan. 1, 1764, to Dec. 31, 1776, were admitted to the church by dismissal and recommendation from other churches, twenty-nine. By profession, one hundred and eighteen. Whole number, one hundred and forty-seven. Number of Baptisms during the same time, three hundred and fifteen.

During Mr. Fiske's ministry, admissions to the church were two hundred and nineteen, forty-eight of whom were admitted by virtue of dismissions and recommendations from other churches. Baptisms, seven hundred and thirty-eight.

In the interval between Mr. Fiske and Mr. Beede, admissions to the church, three. Baptisms, seven.

During Mr. Beede's ministry, admissions to the church, one hundred and fifteen. Baptisms, one hundred and ninety.

From Jan. 13, 1829, when Mr. Beede left, to the present time, Sept. 25, 1839, admissions to the church, forty-two. Admitted by recommendations and dismissions from other churches, from Mr. Fiske's to the present time, sixteen. Baptisms from Jan. 13, 1829, to the present time, thirty. Whole number of admissions to the church, five hundred and forty-two. Whole number of Baptisms, twelve hundred and eighty.

The present number of the members of the church, is seventy-seven.

The ministers settled over the First Congregational Church and Society, have been as follows:—

Jonathan Livermore, ordained Dec. 14, 1763,	Resigned, Feb. 1777.
Abel Fisk, " Nov. 18, 1778,	Died April 21, 1802.
Thomas Beede, " March 2, 1803,	Resigned, Jan. 13, 1829.
Stephen A. Barnard, " Jan. 13, 1830,	" April, 1833.
A. D. Jones, installed, Jan. 1, 1834.	" Jan. 1, 1836.
Nathaniel Whitman, the present minister, installed Oct. 5, 1836.	

The BAPTIST CHURCH in Wilton was constituted April 7, 1817, consisting of eleven members from the Baptist church in Mason, dismissed for that purpose. On the same day, seven persons were baptized and united with the church, and shortly after six others from the church in Mason were added. Fourteen of the members of the church were dismissed a few years since to form a church in Lyndeborough. The present number of its members is eighty-three, of whom fifty-eight reside in the town.

Soon after the organization of the church, Benjamin F. Lane, a Licentiate, was employed as a preacher for a few months. He was followed, June 6, 1818, by Rev. Ezra Wilmarth who was soon after installed their first pastor, and continued with them nearly five years. He was succeeded for a year by Rev. Reuel Lathrop; after which, for a season, they were supplied by neighboring ministers. The meeting-house was erected by the church and society in 1827, and was dedicated November 7, of the same year. On the same day, Rev. Simon Fletcher was ordained as their pastor, and continued with them three years. He was followed, March 12, 1830, by Rev. Caleb Brown, who afterwards became their pastor for two years. In 1833, Rev. Harrison W. Strong received ordination, and became their pastor for two years. Rev. John Cannon was minister from June, 1835, to June, 1836. Rev. Ezra Wilmarth then supplied their pulpit for a few months. In the autumn of 1837, Rev. N. W. Smith took the pastoral charge of the church, and continued with them eighteen months. Since that time they have had only occasional preaching. At the present time they are enjoying the labors of Mr. John Chick, a licentiate.

The SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH was organized July 18, 1823, consisting of seventeen members. Whole number added to the church since its organization, including the original members, and twenty-one since added from the First Church, one hundred and

sixty-two. Present number belonging to the church, one hundred and eleven; nineteen having died, and thirty-two having been dismissed and recommended to other churches. Baptisms, infant, fifty; adults, seventeen; whole number, sixty-seven.

The Meetinghouse was built in 1829, and dedicated January 1, 1830. Their first and present pastor, Rev. William Richardson, was ordained December 15, 1730.

The UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY was established in 1813. It has enjoyed occasional preaching, but has had no settled minister residing in Wilton. It is, however, occasionally united with societies in the neighboring towns in the support of a regular minister. We have been unable to ascertain the number of those who consider themselves at the present time as connected with the society.

The following account of the first minister, Rev. Jonathan Livermore, written soon after his death, has been furnished us by its author, Rev. Ebenezer Hill, of Mason, who was a brother clergyman and intimate friend of Mr. Livermore.

“Rev. Jonathan Livermore was born at Northborough, Mass. Dec. 7, 1729, O. S. and entered a student at Harvard College in the year 1756, N. S., and graduated in the year 1760. To qualify himself for the gospel ministry was his professed object in seeking a liberal education. Whether he was prevented applying himself to learning at an earlier period of life by unfavorable circumstances, or that his mind had taken a different turn about that time, is unknown to the speaker. But at his advanced age to commence a preparatory course of study for such a work, appears to be strong proof that he had weighed the matter, and sincerely devoted himself to serve God, and his generation the remainder of his days in ministerial labors. So soon as the year 1763, he was ordained, and constituted pastor of the church in this town; in which office he continued and labored until the year 1776. And from the estimation in which he was held by his brethren in the ministry, who were acquainted with his labors and manner of life, we have reason to believe that he discharged his ministerial duties with faithfulness. About the year 1776 was a period in which many changes took place, and tender relations were dissolved. At this time of troubles Mr. Livermore was induced to resign his office of pastor of the church in this place. But although his particular relation to this church and people ceased, he did not

relinquish the work of the ministry. He loved to preach the gospel of Christ; and willingly labored wherever divine Providence seemed to open a door; and his brethren and the congregations around have experienced many of his labors of love. In his preaching, he aimed not to please the fancy, but to inform the understanding and affect the heart of the hearers. And notwithstanding his special relation was removed to another church, and he did not commune with this church at the table of the Lord; yet he constantly, when at home, attended on the public worship of God, and lived in brotherly love with his successor."

"In the family his christian character was conspicuous in the regularity and religious order which prevailed, in his great tenderness towards his partner, in the religious education of his children, and in his earnest solicitude for their spiritual welfare. While he labored to teach, he set the example in all religious duties. In the evening of a long life the powers of both his mind and body were remarkably strong and vigorous; and he contemplated death as near at hand with apparent satisfaction, and as the time of his release. And although cut off at last by a stroke so sudden as to give no opportunity to express his views and feelings in the actual conflict with death; we must be permitted to indulge the hope that he was ready to open to his Lord."

The following extract gives the character of Rev. Abel Fiske, the second minister. It is from the sermon of Rev. William Emerson, preached at Wilton, March 2, 1803, at the ordination of Rev. Thomas Beede.

"My brethren of this church and congregation, when that God who is too wise to err, and too good needlessly to afflict his children, was pleased to deprive you of your late pastor, you were not the only mourners; his praise was in every church, which was ever favored with his services, and his merit acknowledged by all who knew him. Some of the earliest impressions, which this heart received, were from his instructive lips; and here, until it ceases to beat, shall the wisdom, prudence, moderation, and piety of a Fiske be remembered with melancholy pleasure."

A farther notice is contained in a note appended to the same discourse, which is as follows:—

"The late Rev. Abel Fiske was born of respectable parents at Pepperell, Mass. May 28, 1752. In 1774 and 1777, he received the

honors of Harvard College. He studied theology at Concord with the author's father in 1775 and 1776, and during part of the time was master of the Grammar School in that town, where he was beloved by his pupils, and respected by the inhabitants. November, 1778, he was ordained in this place. The faithful discharge of his pastoral functions, and his steady adherence to the principles of order and good government greatly endeared him to his flock, and obtained him the high regards and confidence of his numerous friends. His death caused by a paralytic affection in the throat, happened April 21, 1802, and was deeply regretted in this part of the country. His intimate friend, Rev. John Bullard, of Pepperell, preached an affecting sermon at his funeral from Acts xx. 37, 38. He was twice married, and has left a wife and five children."

MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES.

SABBATH SCHOOLS. The first was established in May, 1816, and is believed to have been the first in America, whose leading object—according to the plan now universally followed—was to give moral and religious instruction. Seventy children attended the first season. The text-book used was the Bible, and the Bible only. The number of teachers and pupils now belonging to the Sunday School of the First Parish is about one hundred and thirty. The Baptist and Second Congregational churches have also Sabbath schools connected with them.

LIBRARIES. The oldest public library is the Town Library; it has flourished and languished alternately for at least fifty years.

The Ministerial Library owes its origin and peculiar plan to Rev. Abiel Abbot, D. D., who, in 1824, presented, for the use of the minister of the First Congregational Society, a large number of books to five Trustees, viz. Rev. Thomas Beede, Ezra Abbot, Samuel Abbot, Eliphalet Putnam, and Timothy Parkhurst, and requested them to preserve and increase the library, and when there should be a vacancy in the Board of Trustees, to select some person from said society to fill it. An act of incorporation was soon after obtained. The officers are a President, Clerk, Librarian, and Treasurer; the last two give bonds for a faithful discharge of their duties. At the annual meeting, the books are carefully inspected, and written reports made and recorded of the state of the library and of the funds. Accord-

ing to one of the bye-laws, whoever gives ten dollars at any one time for the use of the library, or books to that amount, becomes thereby a Patron, entitled to the privilege of taking out books, during life. There is a permanent fund for the increase of the library, now amounting to \$250, of which \$100 were given by Rev. Dr. Abbot, \$100 by Samuel Abbot, Esq., and \$50 by Deacon Ezra Abbot. The interest only of this fund is expended. Donations of books have been made from time to time by Dr. Abbot and others. A few years ago a subscription paper was issued to the young men, and somewhat more than \$100 were obtained, of which Samuel Abbot paid \$75. This money was appropriated for the increase of the library, which now contains about 600 volumes. Agreeably to the directions of its founder and principal contributor, all ministers of the gospel resident in Wilton may have the gratuitous use of the library; also, the Congregational minister of Wilton may have the gratuitous use of the library established by the same individual, and on a similar plan, in Peterboro'; and the Congregational minister of Peterboro' may have the like use of the Wilton Library.

A Library of 200 volumes belongs to the First Congregational Society. It was opened for the first time in October, 1838. Its foundation was laid by a donation of 50 volumes from Deacon Samuel Greele and friends in Boston, and of 100 volumes from Augustus Greele, Esq. of New York. Books of great value have been added to this library the present year. It is open to all the members of the parish.

The Sunday School Library of the First Congregational Society contains 400 volumes. The books were selected with great care, mostly by S. Abbot, Esq.

The Second Congregational Society has also a Library.

SUNDAY NOON READING ROOM. This was opened chiefly by the efforts of Samuel Abbot, Esq. in 1822, for the accommodation of that portion of the people, who, living at a distance from the church, could not conveniently go home during the interval between the forenoon and afternoon services. It was furnished with books, pamphlets, and papers of a serious kind, suitable for Sunday reading. At first it was in a neighboring hall; but recently the books, &c. were removed to the meeting-house.

SCHOOLS. There are in the town, nine school-districts and ten

school-houses. The sum raised for the support of schools during the year 1839, was \$600. The average length of the district-schools is, in winter about two months, and in summer about three months. It is believed that all the children in the town, who have arrived at a proper age, without a single exception, unless prevented by ill-health or some such accidental hindrance, regularly attend school.

The school-right of land was sold June 1, 1769. The interest which the town received on the sum for which this land was sold, amounted up to the year 1776, annually, to £5 9s. 5¹/₂d., Lawful money. In 1784, and subsequently, the fund was £67 16s., equal to \$226. The interest on this, and also the interest of the Literary Fund, is applied to the support of schools in addition to the annual tax.

REPRESENTATIVES of the town, since July 15, 1774. Jacob Abbot, Jonathan Martin, Abiel Abbot, William Abbot, Jr., Philip Putnam, Jonathan Burton, Abiel Wilson, Ephraim Peabody, John Stevens, Samuel Abbot, Jonathan Burton, 2d., Joel Abbot, Abram Whittemore, Daniel Batchelder.

SELECTMEN, since the first town-meeting held under the charter, July 27, 1762. James Brown, John Dale, John Cram, Ebenezer Perry, Jacob Putnam, Ephraim Butterfield, John Burton, Jr., Nathan Ballard, Amos Holt, Abner Stiles, Abiel Abbot, Philip Putnam, Joseph Butterfield, James Dascomb, James Maxwell, Jacob Abbot, Joseph Holt, Richard Taylor, Jonathan Martin, William Abbot, Jr., Jacob Adams, Simon Keys, Samuel Greele, Joshua Blanchard, Moses Putnam, Archelaus Batchelder, Richard Whitney, Jeremiah Abbot, Abram Burton, Joseph Abbot, Jr., John Dale, Jr., Daniel Lovejoy, Samuel Greele, Jr., Jonathan Livermore, Bar. Abbot, Abiel Wilson, Eliphalet Putnam, William Pettengill, Isaac Spaulding, R. T. Buss, Lewis Smith, Ephraim Peabody, Ezra Abbot, Jonathan Burton, 2d., John Mack, John Stevens, Oliver Whiting, Asa Stiles, Jonathan Parkhurst, Amos Holt, Timothy Abbot, Jr., Abram Whittemore, Joel Abbot, O. Perham, Daniel Batchelder, Jr., Timothy Gray, Oliver Barrett, J. Barrett Howard, Moses Lovejoy, Asa Stiles, 2d.

TOWN CLERKS. Eben Perry, Philip Putnam, John Burton, Jr., Jacob Abbot, Joseph Holt, William Abbot, Jr., Abiel Abbot, Abiel Wilson, Jonathan Burton, 2d., John Stevens, Timothy Parkhurst.

WAR OF 1812. In this war, Wilton had two men in the regular army. Abiel Wilson, Jr. held a Lieutenant's commission, and Timothy McIntire enlisted as a private soldier. McIntire was slain in battle, on the northern frontier, in the summer of 1814. The militia of New Hampshire were called upon to defend Portsmouth, and Wilton furnished seven or eight men; one of whom, named Foster, was taken sick, and died on his way home.

CASUALTIES. The number of deaths by accident has been thirty-nine. Of these, five were killed by falling trees, or were crushed by logs; four were drowned; five were killed by the fall of the meeting-house frame; seven were scalded; one was burnt; three committed suicide, and the deaths of the remainder were occasioned by different accidents. Of the whole number, twelve were children.

MORTALITY. The whole number of deaths during the last ten years is 162. Average yearly number, 16½. Average age, 36. Six persons died over 90. The whole number of deaths during the seven years beginning with 1784 and ending with 1790, was 71; births, 281; excess of births, 210. Average number of deaths yearly, was 10¼. The population of the town was nearly the same as now, being in 1786, 1013, and in 1790, 1105. This shows that the average number of deaths in the town has increased more than one third.

POPULATION. In 1739 there were two families; in 1755 there were 70 persons; in 1763, 240; in 1775, 623; in 1786, 1013; in 1790, 1105. Since 1790 the population has remained almost uniformly the same, varying but little from 1100, and having never been greater than in 1790. The town contains 45 inhabitants to the square mile.

HEIGHT OF LAND. The lowest land in town on which there is a dwelling-house, belongs to the Wilton Manufacturing Company, occupied by Abram Whittemore, Esq. The most elevated land, is owned and occupied by Mr. John Kimball.

FIRES. The only dwelling-houses ever destroyed by fire in town,

were, Deacon John Flint's, burnt, April, 1810; and Benjamin Parker's, burnt, May, 1833. Two barns have been burnt: one set on fire by accident, in 1774, belonging to James Dascomb; the other belonging to a Mr. Wood, was struck by lightning and consumed in the evening, August 9, 1779.

ROADS AND BRIDGES. The expense of new roads made in Wilton, during the last fifteen years, independent of all the ordinary repairs of the highways, has been above \$10,000.

The first bridge over the Souhegan was the one on the interval above French's mills, and was built in 1760, by Henry Parker. It was at first entirely of wood. Its stone abutments, the first in town, were built in the summer of 1793.

PRICES. During the ten years following the Revolution, the average price of wheat was about one dollar and a half the bushel; rye, one dollar, and corn seventy-five cents. The usual wages of a hired man on a farm were from forty-five to fifty dollars a year. Eight dollars a month, or forty cents a day, were given to those employed only during the haying season.

SLAVES. There were formerly four slaves in town, owned by Thomas Russell, Maj. Samuel Greele, Alexander Milliken, and Archelaus Batchelder. Two of the slaves were males; two females. The latter are still living.

CARRIAGES. The first chaise was introduced into Wilton in 1770, and owned by Rev. Mr. Livermore. There was no other till after the Revolution. The first one-horse wagon made its appearance in 1812. The first sleighs were large double ones, holding ten or twelve persons. They supplanted sleds as a vehicle for carrying families to meeting. They were introduced as early as 1777, and were soon in common use.

MILLS, MANUFACTORIES, MECHANICS, ETC. There are now eight saw-mills in operation; five grist-mills; three tanneries; two fulling mills; one bobbin factory; one cotton factory, burnt in 1839 and not yet rebuilt; one starch factory, owned and carried on by people of Wilton, but itself in the border of Mason; four blacksmiths; ten shoe-

makers, including journeymen; two cabinet makers; one hatter; three stores; two taverns.

PAUPERISM. The first pauper was a man by the name of Stratton, who received aid from the town before the Revolution. From this time till 1830 there were but seven families — and these but in part — who were supported by the town. Some other individuals, but very few in number, have occasionally received aid. In 1830, a farm for the poor was purchased, and has since been carried on by the town. The products of this farm have been nearly sufficient in most years to pay the wages of the overseer and family, and or the support of the poor.

TEMPERANCE. Before the Revolution, although ardent spirits were occasionally used by most of the inhabitants of the town, intemperance was almost unknown. During the war, the habits of camps gradually infected the country; and although the town was never an intemperate one, ardent spirits were in common use. As the orchards grew up, a large number of cider-mills were erected, and large quantities of cider were made to be consumed in the town. It became also an important and profitable article of export. But within the last fifteen years, nearly all of the cider-mills have been suffered to fall into decay, little cider is made, and very few of the inhabitants are in the habit of drinking ardent spirits. It speaks well for the moral sense of the people, that this great change has been brought about easily and naturally, from the change of views and feelings in individual minds, and with little aid from foreign influence. A reformation, of this unforced growth, wrought in the individual by the action of the individual mind and conscience, no one can doubt will be permanent. The Wilton Temperance Society was organized about five years ago, and now consists of between 300 and 400 members.

MISSIONARIES. Lydia Brown went to the Sandwich Islands, in 1836. Amos Abbot and wife (her maiden name was Anstress Wilson,) sailed for Bombay in May, 1834, and are employed as school teachers.

GRADUATES. Abiel Abbot, D. D. 1787; Rev. Jacob Abbot, 1792; William Abbot, Esq. 1797; John Stevens Abbot, 1801; Solomon K. Livermore, Esq. 1802; Ebenezer Rockwood, Esq. 1802; Samuel

Greele, Esq. 1802; Samuel Abbot, Esq. 1808; Rev. Samuel Barrett, 1818; Rev. Warren Burton, 1821; Rev. Abiel A. Livermore, 1833. — The above were graduates of Harvard University. — The following graduated at Dartmouth College. Daniel Rockwood, Esq. 1811; Augustus Greele, Esq. 1813; Timothy Parkhurst, M. D. 1813; Abner Flint, Esq.; David Morgan, Esq. 1835; Lubim Burton Rockwood, 1839. The graduates of Bowdoin College are, Joseph H. Abbot, Esq. 1822; Rev. Ephraim Peabody, 1827; Ezra Abbot, Esq. 1830; Abiel Abbot, 1831. Rufus Abbot, M. D. graduated at Yale College, 1834; Charles Abbot, Esq. at Amherst, 1835; Samuel Flint, Esq. at Middlebury; Rev. John Keyes and Rev. Nathaniel Abbot Keyes were natives of Wilton, and after removing from the town, received a college education. Hermon Abbot, M. D. was two years in Harvard College, and Rev. Alvah Steele, three years at Yale, but did not graduate; Levi Abbot is in his last year at Yale. Whole number, twenty-nine. Of these, twelve studied or are studying divinity; three are physicians; six studied law, and the remainder have been employed in different occupations. Of several of the above, not now living, had we the materials we should be glad to make longer mention. We have received brief accounts of two of them, which we insert, thinking that they may be of interest to their fellow-townsmen.

Ebenezer Rockwood, Jr., son of Dr. E. Rockwood, and one of the most gifted of the sons of Wilton, was graduated at Harvard University, A. D. 1802. While an undergraduate, he had a high reputation as a scholar and a young man of genius. He commenced the practice of law in Boston. Though unaided by that patronage, which arises from large acquaintance and powerful family connexions, his extraordinary talent for his profession soon brought him extensive business. He was considered among the ablest advocates of the Suffolk bar. His mind was deeply imbued with christian principles, and he felt a strong interest in the religious institutions of the country. He died in the spring of A. D. 1815. His early death blighted many fond hopes, and occasioned deep and lasting regret in the hearts of a large circle of friends, who admired him for his genius, and loved him for his virtues.

SAMUEL ABBOT, Esq. He died January 2, 1839, being burnt in a starch factory, carried on by him, in Jaffrey, N. H. He was a graduate of Harvard College in 1808, studied law, and practised first

in Dunstable, N. H., and afterwards in Ipswich, Mass. He then gave up the practice of his profession and removed to Wilton. His investigations led him to believe that starch might be obtained in greater abundance and at a cheaper rate from potatoes than from any other substance, and in connection with his brother, Ezra Abbot, he entered into the business of manufacturing potato-starch, for which he invented the machinery. He was the first to open a branch of business which has since been carried on extensively in various parts of the country, and has given an additional value to the agricultural products of the districts where it is done. He was a man of a very philosophical and highly cultivated mind. There is scarcely a branch of science, of literature, or any department of morals or theology with which he was not apparently as familiar as if it had been the particular study of his life. He was always ready, with personal exertions and his purse, to help forward any good enterprise. His unambitious career was bright with a daily usefulness. His life bore witness that the finest minds may find as large a sphere of usefulness in the retirements of the country as among the crowd of a city. Few have been more beloved and respected when living, or more widely mourned when dead. A manuscript memoir of Mr. Abbot, by Rev. A. A. Livermore, may be found in the Wilton Ministerial Library.

FAMILY RECORDS. It was intended to give a brief account of the descendants of the first settlers. But we have been able to obtain no accounts of this kind with the exception of the following.

JOHN BURTON and wife moved from Middleton, Mass. to Wilton about 1760. He had three sons, the eldest, John, was the deacon of the church. Jonathan, the second son, was a very prominent and useful man in the town; was selectman sixteen years; was representative to the General Court in 1796, and justice of the peace. He was a soldier at Louisburg, and served several times in the revolutionary army, in which he held the rank of lieutenant, and some time after the Revolution, was appointed captain, and then major in the militia. The descendants of John Burton, the first settler, were quite numerous, and are to be found scattered abroad in at least eight different states of the Union.

THOMAS RUSSELL came to Wilton from Andover Mass. in June, 1770, with four small children. The whole number of his descend-

ants has been 221. The number now living is 197. The number residing in Wilton, 23.

ASHBY MORGAN was born at New Salem, N. H. March 27, 1749, brought up in Pelham, commenced working on his farm, which was in a state of nature, in June, 1770; removed his family in 1772. The whole number of his descendants, 151; deaths, 45; now living in Wilton, 28.

BARACHIAS ABBOT removed from Andover September 6, 1786. Whole number of descendants, 55; now living, 40; living in Wilton, 10.

REV. JONATHAN LIVERMORE. Whole number of descendants, 34; now living, 25; in Wilton, 15.

Major ABIEL ABBOT settled in Wilton in 1764. He was, during his life, one of the influential, active, and useful citizens of the town. He was ten times elected selectman, and filled various other offices of trust. Jeremiah Abbot, his brother, came the same year. And William Abbot, another brother, settled here in 1772. He was also, during the whole of his life, a prominent man in town affairs. The descendants of the three brothers are very numerous. Many remain in Wilton — many settled in Maine — and others are found scattered in almost every state of the Union.

AMUSEMENTS. Wrestling was practised on all occasions of public meeting, raisings, &c until about 1815, when the custom died away. Shooting matches, once common, were discontinued about the same time. Hunting matches, in which two captains choose sides, each side being composed of ten or twelve young men, and their object being to see which side shall bring in, on an appointed day, the largest amount of game, have been occasionally continued to the present day. These matches have usually taken place about election time, or in the autumn, and have been occasions of great interest and excitement to those engaged in them. Sleigh-rides are frequent in the winter. Formerly, when the ministers were married, immense parties composed of nearly all who could command a sleigh, went out in procession to meet the newly wedded pair. When Mr. Beede was married, such a party met him on his return, to welcome him and his bride to

her new home, at a tavern in Amherst, ten miles from Wilton. There have been no balls or dancing schools since 1829. Games at cards were never common. Public lectures, the formation of libraries and practical education generally, have changed the tastes and greatly improved the moral condition and usages of society.

WILD ANIMALS. Deer were killed in the east part of the town as late as 1775. Bears and wolves were trapped and killed as late as 1787. Within the memory of persons now living, men have been *treed* by bears. This happened to Abiel Abbot, one of the first settlers, who being in the woods, unarmed, and pursued by one, was obliged to take to a tree. The bear sat and watched him, till wearied with the delay and annoyed by a small dog which Mr. A. had with him, he finally left him. In the winter, the wolves came down from the mountains for food, and it was no unusual thing for parties to go out in pursuit of them. Wild turkeys were shot as late as 1797. Two moose have been killed within the borders of the town, — one on the farm now owned by Ephraim Brown, and one near Mason, killed by a man of the name of Blood. Two extensive meadows were flowed by the Beaver; one on the farm owned by Oliver Whiting, and another on the farm of John Dale. Their dams are yet to be seen. Salmon were caught in the Souhegan about one hundred rods below its junction with Stony Brook, as late as 1773-4.

Most of these facts, as well as various other interesting memoranda for the Centennial Celebration have been kindly communicated by Harvey Spalding, Esq.

We have been favored with a letter from Dr. Abiel Abbot, now in the 75th year of his age, and the oldest man born in Wilton now living, giving an account of the early customs of the town. The picture he gives, is at the same time so minute and so vivid, that we publish it entire.

MY DEAR SIR, — As I have so good an opportunity to send to you, I will not neglect it; and it being Sunday evening, I will say a word about Sunday of olden times. On Saturday evening the work of the week was finished. My father, after washing, and putting on a skillet of water, would get his razor and soap, sit down by the fire and take off his beard; after which he would take his Bible, sometimes some other book. My mother after washing the potatoes, &c., and preparing for Sunday food, used to make hasty pudding for supper, which

was eaten in milk, or if that was wanting, with butter and molasses. The little children were put to bed; early in the evening, my father read a chapter in the Bible and offered a prayer, soon after which the younger part of the family and the hired help went to bed; indeed, the family every night went to their rest soon after supper, especially in the summer. Saturday night and Sunday and Sunday night, a perfect stillness, no play going on, no laughing. Those of us who were old enough, took the Testament, or learned the Catechism or a hymn; and read in the Testament or Primer to father or mother, in the morning. For breakfast, when we had milk sufficient, we had bread and milk; when this failed, bean and corn porridge was the substitute. Sometime after the Revolutionary War, for Sunday morning tea and toast were often used. As we lived at a distance from meeting, those who walked set out pretty soon after 9 o'clock, and those who rode on horseback were obliged to start soon after them; the roads and pole bridges were very bad, and the horses always carried double, and often a child in the mother's lap, and sometimes another on the pommel of the saddle before the father. All went to meeting, except some one to keep the house and take care of the children, who could not take care of themselves. The one that staid at home, was instructed when to put the pudding, pork and vegetables into the pot for supper after meeting. Those who went to meeting used to put into their pockets for dinner some short-cake, or dough-nuts and cheese. We used to get home from meeting at 4 o'clock, often much later. Immediately, the women set the table, and the men took care of the horses, and in the winter, the other cattle, &c. In the short days, it would often be sundown before, or very soon after, we got home. The sled with oxen was often used for meeting when the snow was deep, or by those who did not keep a horse. After supper, the children and younger part of the family were called together and read in the Testament and Primer, and if there was time, said their Catechism (the Assembly's) and some short hymns and prayers. Soon after this, in the Summer, before my father read in the Bible and offered prayer, the cows were brought from the pasture and milked. No work was performed except what was deemed absolutely necessary; the dishes for breakfast and supper were left unwashed till Monday. Every person in the town able to go to meeting, went; if any were absent, it was noticed, and it was supposed that sickness was the reason. If any one was absent three or four Sundays, the tything man would make him a visit; this, however,

was a rare case. The Sabbath was not unpleasant to me; early habit, I suppose, rendered the restraint by no means irksome. I do not recollect feeling gloomy, or disposed to play, or wishing Sunday was gone or would not come.—I don't think of any thing more to say about Sunday, except that the meeting-house was well filled.

Now what more shall I say? A word about schools. These were poor enough. We used to read, spell, write and cipher, after a sort. Our teachers were not taught. The Primer, Dilworth's Spelling Book, and the Bible or Testament were the books. No arithmetic; the ciphering was from the master's manuscript. My father became sensible that the schools were useless, and in the winter of 1782 hired Mr. John Abbot, who was then a sophomore in college, to teach a month or five weeks in his vacation, and invited the district to send their children gratis. This gave a new complexion to the school in the South District; and for a number of years after, qualified teachers were employed about eight weeks in the winter, usually scholars from college. Soon after the improvement in the South District, some of the other districts followed in the same course. To this impulse, I think, we may impute the advance of Wilton before the neighboring towns in education, good morals and sound theology. I venerate my father and mother, more than for any thing else, for their anxiety and sacrifices to give their children the best education, literary and religious, in their power. And it gives me, as I have no doubt it did them, and must you and all the rest of their descendants, the highest satisfaction, that their desires were so well gratified and their labors successful. Their children, grand-children, and so on to the twentieth generation, will have reason to bless the memory of parents of such true worth.

Now for something else. For breakfast in olden times, were bread and milk, as soon as the cows were milked, for all the family. When milk failed, bean porridge with corn. About 9 o'clock there was a *baiting* or luncheon, of bread and cheese or fried pork and potatoes. For dinner a good Indian pudding, often in it blue-berries and suet; pork and beef, through the winter and spring; potatoes, turnips, cabbage, &c. At four or five o'clock, P. M., in the summer, some bread and cheese, or the like. For supper, bread and milk. When milk failed, milk-porridge, hasty-pudding and molasses, bread and molasses, bread and beer, &c. When there was company to entertain, chocolate for breakfast, no coffee. Pewter basins or porringers, and sometimes wooden bowls were used when spoons were required.

Trenchers or wooden plates were used at dinner; when a friend dined, pewter plates were used by father and mother and the friend. You probably remember the pewter platters and plates usually standing on the shelves. None but pewter spoons. The cup for beer was pewter. After which came the brown mug. If a neighbor came in for any purpose, he was asked to drink beer or cider. When women visited their neighbors, they went early in the afternoon, carried their work, and returned home before sundown to take care of milking the cows, &c. Their entertainment was commonly short-cake baked by the fire, and tea, except in the early part of the Revolutionary War. For the visit, they often put on a clean chequered apron and handkerchief and short loose gown.

In the winter, several of the neighbors would meet for a social evening, and would have a supper. There were no select parties; all were neighbors in the Scripture sense. The maid and boy in the family, the same as the children in all respects. I do not recollect ever hearing a profane word in my father's family from any of his hired men, nor at school at Wilton or Andover academy. I do not think that profane language was used by any in the town till after the Revolutionary War. Industry and economy were the order of the times. I do not remember seeing my father or mother angry; they were sometimes displeased no doubt. My father in the winter used to go to Salem or Marblehead to market with shook-hogshead staves, rye, pork, butter, &c., and procure salt, molasses, tea, rum, &c., for the year, as there were no traders in the new towns. Rum was not used except in haying and harvest, and on particular occasions of hard service and exposure, such as washing sheep, burning large pieces of wood, &c. Intoxication was very rare; I do not remember more than one man being intoxicated. Rum was commonly used at raising buildings; half a gill was a good dram. After raising a building, if finished before night, the amusements were wrestling, goal, coits, &c. Goal was the favorite play with boys the day after thanksgiving, and election days, which were all the holidays, I remember. Good humor and cheerfulness always prevailed in our family, and it was generally so I believe. Enough for the present.

Faithfully yours,

ABIEL ABBOT.

We venture to add to the interesting statements contained in the foregoing letter, one fact within our knowledge, relating to a religious custom of former times. It was the habit of the early inhabitants of

this town to have their children baptized in the church the Sunday after they were born, whatever the season of the year or the state of the weather; and accordingly, the writer of the above sketch was himself, before he was a week old, carried three miles, in the month of December, to be baptized in the meeting-house, in which there was no fire! What would our ancestors, could they revisit the earth, say of some of their descendants, who cannot be prevailed on to bring their offspring, even from the nearest distance, to the holy font, at any age, or in any season?

The following extract from a letter, just received from S. K. Livermore, Esq., we are happy to insert here.

DEAR SIR,—That I may contribute, if it be as the poor widow's mite, to the benefits proposed by the Celebration, I will furnish one anecdote, illustrative of the energy of the early settlers in Wilton, and the hardships they endured, which may serve to reprove the efeminacy and self-indulgence of the present day.

One,* who was long since gathered to his fathers, told me that in a severe winter, when the highways were blocked with snow, he several times travelled on snow-shoes about seven miles, bought a bushel of corn and carried it on his back to mill and thence home.

It is well to perpetuate the knowledge of facts like this, that succeeding generations may more fully appreciate the virtues, and trials, and labors of those, by whose instrumentality they are in possession of their present advantages, and may guard against that degeneracy, by which, if not resisted, they will unavoidably be divested of them. It is earnestly to be desired that the scenes and events brought to view by the exercises of the late Celebration, may be indelibly impressed upon the minds of the present and future generations, and that they will thereby be stimulated to a course of conduct, which will manifest that they truly honor the memory of their ancestors

The following are such stanzas as can be recovered from the poem, referred to in the Address, on the fall of the Meeting-house frame.

In Seventeen Hundred Seventy-Three,
 September, seventh day,
 In Wilton did Almighty God,
 His anger there display.

* Mr. Amos Holt.

A very great collection met,
 The meeting-house to raise,
 Wherein to speak God's holy word,
 Also to sing his praise.

God did their labor prosper and
 Erecting of the frame,
 Until it was almost complete,
 And joyful they became.

They thought the worst was past and gone
 And they were bold and brave ;
 Poor souls, they did but little think,
 They were so near the grave !

All of a sudden broke a beam,
 And let down fifty-three ;
 Full twenty-seven feet they fell,
 A shocking sight to see !

Much timber with these men did fall,
 And edged tools likewise ;
 All in a heap together lay,
 With groans and bitter cries.

Some lay fast bleeding on the ground,
 All bathed in crimson gore,
 Crying to Jesus, strong to save,
 His mercy to implore.

Some lay with broken shoulder bones,
 And some with broken arms,
 Others lay senseless on the ground
 With divers other harms.

One in an instant then did pass
 Through death's dark shadowy way,
 Who now is in the realms of wo,
 Or in eternal day.

Two more in a few minutes' space
Did bid this world adieu,
Who are forsaken of their God,
Or with his chosen few.

The rest is wanting.

We have endeavored to make the preceding notices of the history and condition of the town as brief as possible. If they should seem to any one too minute and extended, we would say that we have thought that many things of little interest now, because familiarly known, might be of much interest to those who shall follow us. The aged men are passing away; the traditions of the early times are fast fading into oblivion; we shall soon be in our graves, and the history of the first century of Wilton would, before long, be a blank to our children, unless the facts relating to it were gathered up from individual memories and scattered papers, in which alone they are to be found, and preserved in some more permanent form.

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,

IN

WILTON, N. H.

THE Committee of Arrangements, in the performance of the duties assigned to them by the town, held several meetings in the course of the summer; — Jonathan Livermore in the Chair, and Timothy Parkhurst, Secretary. At these meetings the following sub-committees and officers were chosen.

Committee to collect materials for the history of Wilton, and to invite Rev. Ephraim Peabody to deliver the Address; — Jonathan Livermore, Timothy Parkhurst, Abel Fiske, and Abiel Abbot.

Committee to erect the Pavilion; — Josiah Parker, Caleb Putnam, and Joseph Gray, Jr.

Committee to provide the Dinner; — Joseph Newell, Abram Whittemore, and Elijah Stockwell.

Committee to prepare the Toasts; Timothy Abbot, Eliphalet Putnam, Zebediah Abbot, Abiel Abbot, Harvey Spalding, and Daniel Batchelder.

Committee to procure the Singing; — Timothy Parkhurst, Zebediah Abbot, L. B. Rockwood, Timothy Abbot, Samuel Spalding, James Hutchinson, 3d, and Joseph Wilson.

OFFICERS FOR THE DAY.

President,

EZRA ABBOT.

Vice Presidents,

ABRAM WHITTEMORE,	TIMOTHY PARKHURST,
JONATHAN LIVERMORE,	TIMOTHY ABBOT,
JONATHAN BURTON,	DANIEL BATCHELDER,

OLIVER WHITING.

Chief Marshal,

JONATHAN PARKHURST.

Assistant Marshals,

SAMUEL KING,	CALVIN GRAY,
DAVID WILSON,	OLIVER BARRETT,
HERMON PETTENGILL,	MOSES SPALDING

Toast Masters,

ELIPHALET PUTNAM,	ZEBEDIAH ABBOT.
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The morning of the Celebration dawned auspiciously, and was ushered in with the ringing of the bell and a salute of one hundred guns. The sun rose upon a cloudless sky. The day was calm and clear and mild. Everything conspired to render it one of the finest mornings of early autumn; and many were they who rose betimes and hailed it with joyous anticipations. Emigrants to other towns and to the distant cities and villages of other states, had come back to revisit once more the scenes of their youth, and to celebrate with friends and former associates this grand jubilee of their native town. And now the sons and daughters of Wilton, resident and emigrant, together with numerous guests from abroad, — leaving behind them for a while the cares of professional life, the din of machinery, the business of the farm, the workshop, or the counting-room, — might be seen thronging the roads that ascend from all quarters to the Common. As they approached, the first thing to catch all eyes was a fancy flag, in its semi-circular wreath of evergreen, hovering in the air midway between the two churches on the hill, and appearing to have no support till, on arriving near it, the cord which upheld it was seen stretched from belfry to belfry, and on the flag itself appeared the inscription,

'1739' and '1839,' with other devices between them. The national banner had been raised high in the air, and its stripes and stars, borne on the now rising breeze, were floating gaily over the spacious pavilion, erected on the border of a pleasant field, a few rods east of the old meeting-house. Around the meeting-house stood handsome spruce trees, the growth of the night; while within, it was beautifully ornamented with verdant boughs and wreaths, and a large chandelier of evergreen. The Common was at an early hour alive with people, moving to and fro, or collecting in groups; and the fine appearance of the Miller Guards,—a company of volunteers, organized in the town a short time previous, under the command of Col. Samuel King,—with the cheering music of the Band attending them, gave increased animation to the scene. And throughout the multitudes there assembled, the cordial greetings of old acquaintances, the hearty shaking of hands, the glad voices and speaking countenances, all testified to the overflowing pleasure and good feeling which reigned on the occasion.

About ten o'clock a procession was formed at the Brick Hall, under the direction of Col. Jonathan Parkhurst, the Chief Marshal, and was escorted by the Miller Guards to the Old Meeting-house, which, though large, was soon filled to overflowing. The performances there were as follows:

VOLUNTARY,—by the Band.

INVOCATION,—by Rev. Abiel Abbot, D. D., of Peterborough.

ANTHEM, "Great is the Lord," &c.,—sung by the Choir.

SELECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES,—by Rev. Warren Burton.

THE NATIVITY,—sung by the Choir.

PRAYER,—by Rev. Abiel A. Livermore, of Keene.

MARSEILLES HYMN,—sung by the Choir.

ADDRESS,—by Rev. Ephraim Peabody, of New Bedford.

AN ORIGINAL HYMN, sung by the Choir and the assembly.

PRAYER,—by Rev. Samuel Barrett, of Boston.

GRAND HALLELUJAH CHORUS,—sung by the Choir.

BENEDICTION,—by Rev. Nathaniel Whitman, of Wilton.

The Music was under the superintendence of Mr. Charles Abbot.

ORIGINAL HYMNS,

[Written for the Occasion.]

BY MR. LUBIM B. ROCKWOOD.

Father in Heaven, thy grace impart ;
 Let gratitude inspire each heart ;
 To thee our joyful songs we 'll raise,
 Thy goodness claims our highest praise.

We hail this consecrated day ;
 Accept the tribute here we pay ;
 Let this Centennial Jubilee
 Wake in our hearts new praise to thee.

Let peace attend, a welcome guest,
 May filial love inspire each breast ;
 Join, every voice, the song, the vow,
 We 're brethren all, our Father Thou.

Blest morn of Liberty, whose light
 Effulgent broke the shades of night,
 To dry the weary pilgrim's tear,
 And bid him seek a dwelling here.

Sleep, " Pilgrim Fathers," and be blest ;
 We 'll ne'er disturb your peaceful rest ;
 Long shall the grateful prayer ascend,
 While o'er your sleeping dust we bend.

Inspired with hope, we 'll walk the road
 Of virtue, which our fathers trod ;
 Their praise shall every voice prolong,
 And loudest anthems swell the song.

BY MISS SARAH W. LIVERMORE.

Almighty God! we own thy power,
 Which on the Pilgrim Fathers smiled ;
 The forests fled, and bloomed the flower
 Where all was sterile, drear, and wild.

These fertile hills our fathers found,
 Their dwellings rose beneath thy care,
 They early sought for hallowed ground,
 And on it built a house of prayer.

One hundred years thy guiding hand
 O'er us has held unerring sway,
 Dependant beings, still we stand,
 O, guide us on from day to day.

Our labors bless, our garner's fill,
 Our hearts enlighten by thy grace;
 Our study be, to do thy will,
 While in this transient dwelling-place

And as each passing year shall sweep
 To their last rest, some friends we love,
 As joy shall smile, and wo shall weep,
 Prepare us for a home above.

At the close of the exercises in the Church, the procession, with an accession of ladies, out-numbering the gentlemen, moved to the Pavilion, where the divine blessing was invoked by Rev. William Richardson, of Wilton, and about five hundred persons partook of a dinner provided by Mr. Joseph Newell. Meanwhile the sky became overcast with clouds and a few drops of rain fell, which suggested the expediency of retiring to a more comfortable place. Accordingly, the company rose from the table, and thanks having been returned by Rev. A. D. Jones, of Brighton, they marched back to the Meeting-house, where the proceedings were as follows:—

Deacon EZRA ABBOT, President of the Day, introduced the proceedings with the following remarks:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,— It gives me pleasure to congratulate you on the favorable circumstances in which we are come together to celebrate this grand jubilee of our native town. The hundredth anniversary of the first settlement of Wilton, furnishes an occasion for mingling our common sympathies, and for indulging in joyful and grateful recollections. The early history of the town must be full of interest to us all. Here our fathers endured hardships and privations, and we, their

descendants, are now enjoying in peace the rich fruits of their labors. Favored by the smiles of Providence, they laid the foundation of those institutions under which the town has grown up to its present state of prosperity. I cannot but express the high gratification I feel in beholding all around me animated by feelings so much in harmony with the spirit of the occasion. And I trust that the memory of this day will long be cherished, and be ever attended with pleasing and profitable recollections.

At the request of the President, Mr. Eliphalet Putnam proceeded to announce the Toasts prepared for the occasion.

1st Toast. *This Centennial gathering of the Wilton Family*,—An occasion consecrated to grateful recollections, to cheering anticipations, and to social, fraternal, and christian greetings.

[Glee,—“*Hail! Smiling Morn*,”—Sung by Mr. Charles Abbot and others.]

2d. Toast. *The Metropolis of New-England*,—Knowing how to appreciate wisdom in council, she calls to her high places the wise and gifted of the land.

Deacon SAMUEL GREELE, of Boston, rose and said,—

Mr. President,—I perceive by the significant nod of your head, that the sentiment just uttered has reference to myself. I furthermore understand that this nod has an official bearing, directing me to address this assembly of friends and fellow-townsmen. As I have always been in the habit of complying with that apostolic injunction, which requires us to “submit to the powers that be,” I will not refuse obedience to the legitimate authorities of this day, although I had much rather be a hearer than a speaker on the present occasion.

We have been told by the orator of the day, that the first grist-mill, erected in this town, was built by a remote ancestor of mine; and that the ancient inhabitants conveyed their wheat and their corn to this mill, to be converted into flour and meal. I wish it were in the power of his humble descendant, in return for the flattering compliment paid him this day, to bring to this “feast of reason and flow of soul,” as well ground, and as well bolted flour, as the good old Deacon Samuel Greele, of a former generation, gave to his customers of a by-gone century, the primitive Wiltonians of his day.

Mr. President,—this day, connected as it is, with many delightful reminiscences and associations, brings to my mind some tender, not to say sad recollections. Forty-one years ago, this day, a beloved

parent was summoned to another, and I trust, to a better world. The manner of his death,* equally sudden to himself, and unexpected by his family, is well known to the elder part of those now present. The delicate and kind ministrations of friends and neighbors, then made an impression on my youthful heart, which the finger of time can never efface. While most of those, who attended the funeral obsequies of my honored father, have, in their turn, been removed to the world of spirits, and relatives and friends have wept over their graves, it is my privilege and my happiness to behold among you, some, who at that time mingled their sympathies and their tears with those of the afflicted family. To them I would observe, that the affectionate interest, then expressed for me and mine, forms one of the links in that adamant chain, which binds me to my native town.

I trust that these remarks, though somewhat egotistical and sombre in appearance, are not incompatible with the festivities of the occasion; for, if I have not greatly mistaken the purpose of this celebration, we have met to weave fresh garlands for the graves of the dead, as well as to express our fraternal regards for the living.

Many of the honored and lamented dead now come to my mind like warm, living realities. The two first pastors of this town, the strong minded and sincere Livermore; the meek, modest and affectionate Fiske; the generous, hospitable and exemplary Rockwood, one of the earliest physicians of this place, whose house was ever the resort of the enlightened and the good; these, and other venerable and venerated men, together with the virtuous and pious women of other times, now appear to my imagination, clothed anew in their earthly habiliments. The lessons which I received from their lips, are deeply engraven on the tablet of my memory.

My heart now prompts me to pay a passing tribute of love and respect, to the memory of one, more recently removed from you, but whose virtues are enshrined in all our bosoms. I refer to the beloved, the honored, the lamented Abbot.† His attachment to his native place, led him with others to propose and plan the Celebration in which we are now engaged. Many of the institutions of the religious society, in which he worshipped, and of the town in which he was born and in which he lived, are monuments of his warm-hearted at-

* He was instantly killed by the falling of a tree, when on his way to attend a town-meeting, in the year 1798.

† Samuel Abbot, Esq. who died Jan. 1839.

tachment, as well as memorials of his enlightened zeal in the great cause of human improvement, and of Christian virtue. It was my privilege to be one of his instructors, when in early life, a member of Philips's Academy in Andover. I well recollect his untiring industry, his amiable and correct deportment, his unwavering allegiance to the dictates of duty and of conscience, which pointed him out as a pattern to the other members of that venerable seminary of learning. To adopt the expressive language of scripture, "he seems to have been sanctified even from his birth." It is fully known to you all, how well the fruits of his mature life corresponded with the buds and the blossoms of his early years. If the spirits of the "just in Heaven" take cognizance of human affairs, we trust, that his benignant spirit is now looking down on the festivities and solemnities of this day, with joyful approbation.

I have spoken of one of the reasons of my attachment to the town of Wilton. Another reason I doubtless share in common with my friends, who, like myself, have been led to seek their fortunes in other towns and cities. It was here, that we received our primary education. And let me ask, sir, what is so well adapted to develop the whole complex being of man, to give a healthy tone to the body and the mind, as attendance on the district school, with occasional labor in the field and on the farm. It is here, that the storehouse of the imagination becomes enriched with its most gorgeous imagery, and the boy is trained to those habits of industry, to that self-dependence and self-control so serviceable to the man in after life. Do you think, Mr. President, that the genius of the reverend gentleman, who has delighted us this day, by his eloquence and learning, could have taken such lofty and excursive flights, if it had been hemmed in, during early life, by the brick walls of a dusty city? I venture to assert, that he drank in the inspiration, which has welled up at this time in his own bosom, and which has made our hearts thrill with gladness and joy, from the pure fountains, which gush from your sunny hills, and which meander in purling streams through your deep valleys, and your green meadows. Do you think that another reverend gentleman, now in my eye, could have so well gratified and instructed his numerous readers, by pointing out, in a manner so peculiarly his own, the advantages and the defects of the district school, if he had not himself been an actor in some of those juvenile dramas, which he so beautifully describes?

Do you think, that the talented lady, who has given proof of the

versatility of her genius, in the composition of the solemn hymn, just sung with so much effect in your church, and of the merry song, which (to speak in parliamentary language) now lies on your honor's table for future use, could have so charmed us by the sweet warblings of her gentle muse, if she had been fluttering and flaunting in early life, in the rustling silks of the city, and promenading its Broadways and its By-ways, instead of amusing her leisure hours, in culling the wild flowers of the fields, and in listening to the music of the feathered songsters of the groves ?

A knowledge of the elements of agriculture, which formed an important part of our early education, may be the means of future support, as well as an agreeable and healthy recreation to some of us, who are now otherwise occupied. What a resource must it be to the scholar, the merchant, the physician, the lawyer, and the clergyman, who have been reared on the farm, — what a resource, I repeat, must it be to them to feel, amid the fluctuations of the times, the caprices of popular favor, and the discouragements of professional life, that, should fortune frown on their efforts for the support of themselves and their families, they can return to their native soil, and draw nourishment from that bountiful mother earth, which gave them birth. Should this be the fortune of any of us, I now bespeak from my kind friends, in his behalf, an interchange of agricultural labors, and other friendly offices ; and I venture to promise, on his part, earnest co-operation, in building up the literary and religious institutions of the town.

I respect the hard hand and the sinewy arm of honest labor, as much, sir, as I despise the hand of indolence, though it may be as white as the lily of the field, and as soft as the head with which it is connected. This labor, when prompted by the pure and pervading motive of supporting a loving wife, educating affectionate children, and contributing to the social and religious institutions of the times, rises to the high dignity of a moral and Christian virtue.

It may likewise be said, without disparagement to other employments, that the labor of the husbandman is the basis of a nation's wealth ; for without it, the merchants and the banks would all fail, and the literary and professional men would all starve.

I love the country and its various pursuits. How often have I longed, when visiting the ancestral mansion, where I first drew my breath, to return to the paternal acres, to partake of the rural repast, under the branches of the wide spreading elm ; to drink water, fresh

and cool, from the "old oaken bucket;" and to join in the merry song of "harvest home!"

A generation has passed, since I bade farewell to my residence in this town. I now behold those of my companions, who like myself, were then playful, beardless boys, now, with the staid and grave demeanor of manhood, filling the seats and occupying the stations of their fathers. The fathers, where are they? Alas! they have gone to their final account, and to their lasting home. But, thanks to Heaven! they have left us the imperishable inheritance of their virtues. May we bequeath to our children, and they in turn to theirs, as goodly a name, and as fair a fame, as our ancestors have bequeathed to us; so that our posterity, who may join in the second Centennial Celebration of this town, may have as good reason to hallow our memories, as we have had to hallow the memories of those, who have gone before us.

Permit me, Mr. President, once more to express my heartfelt attachment to the good old town of Wilton. I call her old, for it must be allowed, that, as she has attained her hundredth year, she is now well out of her teens, and well out of her minority. May she ever possess, as now, that regard for order, that love of learning and religion, and all those other virtues, which so well become her age, her character, and her station. She will thus be an example, worthy of imitation to her younger sisters of the Granite State, and throughout the land.

In conclusion, sir, I offer you a brief sentiment, which, I trust, will find a response in the heart of every one who hears me.

Our recollections of the beloved, the honored, the lamented Abbot.—The memory of the just and good will never perish.

3d Toast. *The White Pine Trees, which his Majesty, in the town charter, reserved "for the use of his royal navy."*—The people of Wilton know how to make a better use of them, by applying them—not for the destruction of life—but to promote its comforts.

Original Song, by MISS SARAH W. LIVERMORE, sung to the tune of Yankee Doodle, by S. K. Livermore, Esq., of Milford.

This town was all a forest deep,
 One hundred years ago, sir;
 The vales were low, the hills were steep,
 And rivers wander'd thro', sir.

A few brave men, a pilgrim band,
 Sought this far-off location,—
 They saw it was a goodly land,
 And here they fix'd their station.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, here's the place,
 Yankee Doodle dandy,
 We like the right old-fashion'd ways,
 They are so good and handy.

From time to time the settlers came,
 And many a spot was built on ;
 At length the town must have a name,
 And so they call'd it Wilton.
 Now wake the harp, and tune the lyre,
 To sing of ancient days, sir ;
 This rural theme the song inspire
 To sound old Wilton's praise, sir.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, &c.

Those good old days our fathers saw,
 Has fashion strangely alter'd ;
 From customs good, which then were law,
 How many widely falter'd ;
 The aged now remember when,
 All country folks must labor,
 And all who lived around were then,
 To all, a friend and neighbor.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, this was right,
 Yankee Doodle dandy,
 It help'd to make the labor light,
 When neighbors were so handy.

In homespun were the people drest,
 Of woollen, tow, or linen ;
 Their Sunday suits, which were the best,
 Were neatly made by women.
 And women then could wash and bake,
 And also were good spinners ;
 The maids could ply the hoe and rake,
 While matrons cook'd the dinners.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, &c.

No draught from China's sultry land,
 At morning meals was seen, sir ;
 The black cow* gave a beverage bland,
 Few drank tea, black or green, sir ;
 And coffee was not tasted then,
 To make their cares seem lighter,
 Altho', 't is true, that most good men
 Thought rum would make them brighter.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, here we meet,
 Yankee Doodle dandy,
 With goodly cheer our friends to greet,
 But not with rum and brandy.

Our fathers raised a house of prayer,
 When few there were to build it,
 And every Sabbath, foul or fair,
 The people nobly fill'd it ;
 To meeting went, both young and old,
 'T was then but little trouble,
 For none would keep a horse, we 're told,
 That could not carry double.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, &c.

So all on horseback then did ride,
 Unless they went by sledding,†
 And e'en the bridegroom and the bride
 Rode double to the wedding.‡
 And though the girls, we 're told 't is true,
 Could not then dance cotillions,
 We know that all the country through,
 They used to ride on pillions.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, all could dance,
 Yankee Doodle dandy,
 No master then was brought from France,
 To make them skip more handy.

* *Black Cow*.—The milk of the black cow was a quaint name for bean-porridge.

† *Sledding*.—Sleighs were not in use; people rode to meeting in winter on sleds.

‡ *Wedding*.—It was the custom for the bride to ride to the minister's behind the bridegroom to have the ceremony performed.

And now the times, we say, improve,
 And learning is more plenty ;
 At railroad pace the people move,
 And when they're five and twenty,
 They've gone the rounds of learned lore —
 Are fit for any station —
 Then quickly pass, are seen no more,
 And thus goes on the nation.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, &c.

This season be a land-mark strong,
 To guide us on our way, sir,
 And as we pass through life along,
 Let us not go astray, sir ;
 To good old days we'll bid adieu,
 And so we'll travel on, sir ;
 We'll wish for all, good hearts and true,
 And will wind up our song, sir.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, let us sing,
 Yankee Doodle dandy ;
 Old time is ever on the wing,
 Improve it while it's handy.

4th Toast. *The State of Maine*.—The fostering mother of many sons of Wilton,—prosperity attend them in their adopted home.

WILLIAM ABBOT, Esq. of Bangor, Me. responded ; —

I thank you, Mr. President, for the kind manner in which you have welcomed those natives of Wilton, who have come from the State of Maine, to unite in the greetings and pleasures of this interesting occasion. The welcome is received by me, and, I doubt not, by all who are embraced in it, in the same spirit with which it is given ; and it adds another link to the chain which binds us to our beloved and native home. After long absence it is pleasant to revisit the scenes of our youth ; and that pleasure is greatly enhanced by the cordial reception of our friends, from whom we have been so long separated. The delight we feel in renewing our acquaintance with these scenes, can scarcely be realized by those who have always remained on their native soil, and to whom these scenes have become familiar. The lofty mountains which surround this town, and the

streams which run through its valleys made, indeed, a strong impression on my youthful mind ; but it was not until after long absence, that I fully felt the beauty and grandeur of its scenery. Now I perceive something peculiarly interesting in the views presented from the hills, whence we see cultivated farms, as they rise gradually from the rivers flowing through the valleys, until they reach the tops of the mountains, in the surrounding towns. The grand outlines remain faithful to my memory ; while the hand of labor and taste have filled up the picture with well-cultivated farms and convenient dwelling houses ; so that nature and art have combined to make Wilton one of the most picturesque and beautiful towns in the State.

Agriculture is, and will probably forever continue to be, the principal employment of the inhabitants of this town. No wise man can desire to have it otherwise. There is no business better calculated to develop the physical, the moral and intellectual man than agriculture ; nor is there any which affords more pure and rational satisfaction to the mind. There has, indeed, existed, and perhaps there still exists, a foolish prejudice against those employments which are carried on by manual labor, and particularly agriculture. This has arisen from the idea which has prevailed, that education was not necessary for a farmer. But this erroneous notion is wearing away, and with it the prejudice against the business of a farmer. As the community becomes more enlightened, man is regarded according to the qualities of his heart and his intellectual cultivation, and not his profession or employment. Let the farmer be thoroughly educated, and let him be properly instructed in the art of agriculture, and pursue his business with intelligence and industry, and the labor of the husbandman will be no longer despised.

If any one profession or business is more respectable than another, agriculture may lay claim to it. The first employment of man was the cultivation of the ground ; and this was conferred upon him by God, who created him in his own image. Agriculture, therefore, can never be justly considered as less respectable in itself than any other calling. Adam was employed in tilling the ground, and Eve was made a help-meet for him. Let not the fair daughters of Eve despise their employments ; but let them consider it high praise to be qualified to perform their duty, in whatever situation they may happen to be placed.

A century has elapsed since the first settlement of this town. What has been done by our fathers and by ourselves during this

period, now closed, is the property of the historian. No act, which has been performed can now be altered, but must remain, for good or for evil, forever. But the future is within our control. May we pursue the good and the true, in such manner, that when at the end of the present century, those who come after us shall unite in a celebration similar to the present, they may be justified in bestowing upon us, as high praise, as that which we now award to our ancestors.

Mr. President, I beg leave to offer, as an expression of my own wishes, the following sentiment.

The Second Century of Wilton.—May it be filled with wise designs and virtuous deeds.

5th Toast. *The First Settlers of Wilton.*—Honor and respect to the memory of those who wandered in doubt where we walk in safety.

REV. ABIEL ABBOT, D. D., offered the following remarks:—

Mr. President,—I thank God that my life has been spared, and my health is such as enables me to meet my friends here on this centennial jubilee. I look around and ask, Where are the fathers? but nothing is seen but their precious remembrance in their sons. They were men whom I well remember, whom I have always held in high esteem and veneration. Their devout and venerable appearance in this holy temple, where they religiously and constantly worshipped, is now fresh in my memory. The impressions on my young mind of their piety and uprightness, and of their friendly and heavenly deportment here, at home and everywhere, were a rich blessing to me, and rendered the memory of those venerable patriarchs most precious and lasting. I see here my sisters and their daughters, whom I hail and recognise as bearing the resemblance of our venerated mothers, of whom I ever think with the warmest affection and most respectful regard. They were worthy companions and helps meet for our fathers. They were partners in all their toils, hardships and privations. They were patient, contented, and cheerful; and by their efforts alleviated the burdens of their husbands, and by their smiles encouraged them in their labors and trials. Their countenance and kind expressions are still fresh in my mind, though years have elapsed, since they and their beloved companions went to their better home. They came to houses not finished, not painted, not ceiled, as we see them now; they had no parlor, no carpet, no curtains, no sofa; for some of these

every-day conveniences, they had no word in their vocabulary. But they were happy, — happiness is the property of mind. They took good care of the household. They wrought flax and wool; the card, the spinning wheel, and the loom, were the furniture of the house. All were clothed with domestic products; articles were also made for the market. They were healthy and strong; they and their daughters were not enfeebled by luxuries and delicacies, nor with working muslins or embroidery; tea and cake were rarely used; coffee was unknown. Their dress was plain, and adapted to the season and their business; one dress answered for the day and the week. Their living and dress produced no consumptions, as now. Our fathers and mothers were benevolent, hospitable and kind; the stranger was received, as in the most ancient time, with a hearty welcome. In their own neighborhood and town, they were all brothers and sisters. There was an admirable equality, a home-feeling and heart-feeling among all. Their visits were not formal, ceremonious and heartless, but frank, cheerful and cordial. Their sympathy for the sick, unfortunate and distressed, was expressed by their ready assistance and kindly affectioned help. When prosperous, all partook in the common joy; when sickness or calamity befell any, all were affected, the sorrow was mutual, and aid and relief, as far as possible, were afforded. They were, indeed, one family, — all members of one sympathizing body.

But what calls forth our warmest gratitude and most affectionate esteem, and is the crowning feature of their character and, in fact, comprehends their other virtues, is, they were *godly women*; they were religious women; they carefully observed religious institutions. The duties of the Sabbath, of family and public worship, and family instruction, were conscientiously and faithfully performed. Bad roads, unpleasant weather, want of comfortable conveyance, were hindrances to public worship easily overcome. If the snow had blocked up the road, our mothers fastened on the snow-shoe. The ox-sled was often used in winter to convey the family, especially our mothers and sisters, to the church. The Sabbath was devoted to the study of the Bible and other religious purposes. Blessed is the memory of our mothers for their early religious instruction of their children, and others committed to their care. After the service of the sanctuary, the children were called together; they read in the Primer or Testament, as they were able; they were taught to say their hymns, their prayers, and the catechism. Their prayers were repeated every night

on going to bed. The mother began their instruction early; she literally brought them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. I reverence and thank my mother, for teaching me the catechism. Though it is hard to be understood, not fitting for babes, and in some parts erroneous, it was the best she knew, — and I thank her for teaching it, and my father for encouraging me to learn it. A deep reverence of God and sacred things was imprinted on my mind; and I have no doubt of my being a better man and better christian for this instruction.

And much, Mr. President, very much of the prosperity, peace and high reputation of the inhabitants of this town is owing to the faithful instruction and exemplary character of our fathers and mothers. Your well-fenced and cultivated fields, your neat and well-furnished dwellings, your domestic enjoyments, and the privileges of your children, are, in great measure, to be attributed to the love of truth and the practice of honesty, industry, integrity and piety, which were early impressed upon the minds of the young. Our fathers and mothers were careful to educate no domestic for the penitentiary, and to their lasting honor be it said, that no one of their children has been imprisoned and punished for crime.

But, sir, the time is short, and I will proceed no farther, — only offering this sentiment :

The Mothers of Wilton, our Sisters and their Daughters. — May the next generation be worthy descendants of the past.

[*The Fisherman's Glee* sung.]

6th Toast. *The Clergy of Wilton,* — Ever active in the cause of intellectual, moral, and religious improvement.

Rev. N. WHITMAN responded :—

Mr. President,—In rising to offer a sentiment, I beg leave to preface it by a word of explanation. This day, sir, is the anniversary of an event, which, forty-one years ago, filled this town with sudden and deep mourning. As Captain Samuel Greele was on his way to attend a town-meeting, a decayed tree by the road-side, struck by a powerful gust of wind, fell, and precipitated him from his horse to the ground, a corpse. By this providence, his family, and the whole community, were called to mourn the loss of one, who was highly respected and greatly beloved. Captain

Greele was a man of a public spirit. He adorned a Christian profession by a Christian practice. To the literary, moral, and religious welfare of his family he was ardently devoted. His eldest son, Samuel, had, at the time of his father's death, just become a member of Harvard College. Through the blessing of Heaven on the exertions and sacrifices of a mother of great energy and great worth, seconded by corresponding efforts on the part of her children, both Samuel and Augustus, the younger son, were enabled to complete a collegiate education. On the enterprise of these sons prosperity has smiled. And they have manifested a spirit and character worthy of their parentage. It adds greatly to our joy, sir, on this interesting occasion, that these sons have come, one from the metropolis of New-England, the other from the metropolis of the Empire State, to reciprocate with us fraternal sympathies and congratulations. By their permission I must crave to state a fact, which reflects honor on their character, but which their feelings might incline them to conceal from the notice, to which it is justly entitled. On the memorable spot, where Capt. Greele fell, there now stands a beautiful marble monument. It is a monument erected by filial piety to parental worth. But, sir, this is not a monument of "any private interpretation." While it reflects deserved honor on the Greele family, it also embodies the spirit of the Wilton family.

If, sir, as you have been pleased to say, "the clergy of Wilton have been ever active in the cause of intellectual, moral, and religious improvement," it is my joyful duty to say, that one principal cause of this has been, that they have been nobly sustained and encouraged in this course, by the exemplary devotion of the people to these high objects. On this characteristic trait of the people of Wilton it would give me pleasure to enlarge. But this office I yield to my immediate predecessor, the Rev. Mr. Jones, who will do the subject appropriate justice.

With these remarks, I offer, sir, the following sentiment.

The Greele Monument,— It eloquently proclaims the glory of Wilton,— the devotion of the parents to the best welfare of the children, and the gratitude of the children to venerated and beloved parents.

Remarks of Rev. A. D. JONES, of Brighton, Mass., formerly the pastor of the First Church in Wilton.

Mr. President,— I should be unworthy the honor of being even an adopted son of Wilton, did I refuse to respond to the call just

made upon me by the reverend gentleman who last addressed you, albeit, with a spirit quite too common in our profession, he has taken the liberty to put the laboring oar into another's hand, rather than ply it himself, when it seemed so much more his duty than mine, and when, withal, he could have used it with much better success than I can. However, I will bandy no more words with my brother, but "say my say," and make room for other sons of this ancient town — for ancient she must be considered, as she has to-day numbered her hundredth year — who have come up to this first and glorious Century Festival of their dear native town.

I rejoice, sir, to see this day, and to stand here in this goodly assemblage. It is a pious labor in which we are engaged. It is good thus to scrape away the dust of a hundred years from around the first stone our fathers planted here, to consecrate it anew with our prayers and joys and tears and hopes, and to twine about it fresh garlands of our love and veneration, for those who so nobly commenced the good work which their not degenerate sons have so successfully carried on. If they who have rested from their labors have any cognizance of human affairs — and for one I believe they have — surely they must look upon this scene with a high and holy satisfaction, and count the tears and toils and sacrifice, the story of which has been so eloquently told us to-day, a small price compared with the blessings. And when, sir, a hundred years hence, you and I and all of us here shall long have ceased from life, and other generations gather on this spot and search for this same old altar-stone, and consecrate our memories who forgot not the planters of it, may there be no cause for a shadow on our brow, as from our high estate — Heaven grant we reach it — we look down upon and bless them, our children's children's children, in their filial work.

Allusion has been made, by my brother, in answer to the sentiment which called him up, to the support which the clergy have ever received from the laity of Wilton. My own experience, Sir, goes to confirm his remark. It may be said of all places, that a judicious and successful ministry greatly depends on the character of the ministered unto, and that if *they* be what they should, the ministry will be blessed. Eminently is the truth of this last assertion proved in *this* place, as the concurrent testimony of those who have held the sacred office here will show. If I may be permitted to allude to the brief years which, as the religious teacher of the people who worship in this ancient house, I passed here — a period I must say on which I

reflect with as much pleasure as upon any other equal period of my life, and which owed its brevity to a dispensation of Providence, which robbed me of my health, and left me no alternative but to rest a dead weight upon the parish or to leave it — I say, if I may be permitted to refer to my own experience on this point, every hour of my ministry here afforded evidence of the readiness and ability with which every measure which I proposed for the improvement of our condition, was seconded and sustained by my people, who, better than any other I ever knew, understood and appreciated the sacred office. I rejoice to bear this public testimony to their great forbearance and faithfulness. Ever shall I have occasion to remember it while I live. The vision of that scene, which ordinarily met my eye, when I walked down this aisle at the close of the forenoon service, comes up as freshly before me as if it were yesterday. These venerable benches and the venerable men who occupied them — I see them all. I allude to the Sunday School, a blessing our fathers had not; and their sons are grateful for! Who were the teachers of that school? Yourself, sir, at the head, and others nearly as old as yourself — your compeers in one of the humblest and yet the most glorious work that ever engaged the able head and warm heart of man. I see you still, in yonder pew, with a band of young men and maidens around you — and I see many of them here to-day, matrons and sires — hanging on your words of instruction with as much and deep interest as those words were spoken. What a relief was this to my wearied frame. What a helping of my infirmities. What a seconding of my own feeble efforts. Sir, you and I have cause for gratitude; for some of those young men and maidens are now among the most hopeful pillars and beauteous stones of this Christian temple. And not only you, sir, but many others who are this day here, and *one*,* alas! *not here*, whose memory has been so touchingly and properly alluded to this day, and of whom I dare not trust myself to speak. And indeed, sir, it would be far more difficult to say who were *not*, than who *were* the helpers of my joy, during my brief sojourn among you.

I trust I may be excused for so much that may seem personal and exclusive on such an occasion. But it is all "*a family concern*;" and I doubt if there be a true son of Wilton who does not rejoice to hear any other and every other son spoken of in free, frank, hearty, fraternal love.

And here are other "men of God" before us, who have minis-

* Samuel Abbot, Esq.

tered at other and more recently consecrated altars in this place; and I doubt not their experience attests the truth of the sentiment I have endeavored to support, that the clergy of Wilton have owed their success as much to the co-operation of their parishioners as to their own zeal and talents and learning.

I wish, Mr. President, to say one word on another topic intimately connected with the clerical profession. Time was when the minister was approached with awe, — when he was regarded as the dictator to conscience, and the arbiter of all questions of faith; and whatever he said and did was acquiesced in because said and done by him. It is not so now; great changes have taken place — and for the better? Ay, sir, *for the better*. If freedom of thought and the researches to which its cultivation has led, be better than a blind submission to fallible teaching, then it is for the better, and not for the worse. Behold some of the results; a more enlightened ministry, and a fuller investigation of truth on the part of the laity; Sabbath Schools, Bible Classes, and like institutions; increase of biblical knowledge, and a wider application of it to the interests of practical life. And is not this better? Not that we lack nothing. Far from it. The day is but growing into light; but is not even *this*, sir, better than the faint rays of the morning star? But the meridian shall come, and no human power shall hinder it, for freedom is as the path of the righteous growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

And never could even the present measure of light have come, with the pulpit, — the chief engine in the great work of man's redemption, after the voice of Him whom we love and honor as our Saviour, — with the pulpit, I say, so hedged around with superstitious fear, that the people dared not examine for themselves. Let the pulpit be free; but let him who stands in it yield to the demand of the people for the reasons of what he utters. Let the humblest layman be encouraged to examine all he says — not indeed in a captious or fault-finding spirit, but yet with freedom. I would not depreciate my office. I deem it the most honorable ever yet conferred on man. It is enough that it is of divine ordination. But I would invest it with no false glory or sacredness. I know and feel that, if it be pure and free, and kept so by him who fills it, both it and he will command the respect and love of all good and thoughtful men.

The press, sir, in our land, is doing much for truth, but the living voice far more. I would rather every press in the land were broken, than that every living voice were hushed. In our courts of justice,

our halls of science and learning, our state and national councils, our common schools, and last and greatest, our churches; in these, the living voice teacheth; and with a power which vice and ignorance and tyranny can never withstand. To all this the press is a helper; and I respect and honor it as such. But I have placed the pulpit at the head, because, from my soul, I believe that to it, more than to any thing and all things beside, do we owe the civil and religious blessings of this day. When the press was dumb, and no legislator dreamed of stemming the tide of error which swept over Christendom, bearing before it every vestige of liberty and truth — it was then, sir, that the pulpit spoke, and in such tones that monarchs and tyrants trembled, and the dead bones moved and came into life again, and rose to freedom and to truth. And ever since hath it spoken, and ever since hath its voice been heard, and pondered, and respected. And ever, hereafter, so long as learning, and prudence, and independence, and zeal, and a sincere, fervent piety shall clothe its ministers, will it speak and be heard; for it utters the voice of God, as it spake through his Son, and still speaks through his faithful messengers.

Before sitting down, Mr. President, I beg permission to offer the following sentiment.

An enlightened and devoted Ministry and a co-operating People.—The sure pledge of success, and the true idea of the Christian Church.

The following sentiments were furnished by Augustus Greele, Esq., of New-York.

The past and present Clergymen of Wilton.— Their influence,— that of the early and latter rain. Good seed strown on good ground brings forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, and some thirty.

The Town of Wilton.— It has been one hundred years planting the seeds of Industry, Morality, and Virtue,— may the coming century return her an abundant harvest in the Intelligence, Prosperity, and Happiness of her inhabitants.

7th Toast. *The Sons and Daughters of Wilton.*— Be they comets or planets, fixed stars or shooting stars, the centripetal force will sometimes bring them harmoniously together; the cycle is one hundred years.

[*The Laughing Glee*, sung.]

8th Toast. *Lord Brougham.*— “The Schoolmaster abroad,” teaching Old England the lessons of New England.

[Song, — *The bright rosy morning*.]

9th Toast. *Our Common Schools*. — How changed from “the District School as it was.” — “Memorus Wordwell,”* the renowned speller, is no longer perched on the green wood pile, to *spell* his classmate Jonas.

Rev. WARREN BURTON responded: — †

Mr. President, — In addition to the allusions which I have already made to particular persons and circumstances in my school experience, I would say a few words concerning my first schoolmaster. There are many here who have most pleasant and grateful recollections of the same individual, and their hearts I doubt not will fully respond to the slight eulogium I may offer.

My earliest impressions about a “minister” were, that he was the most awful being in the world. Next to him the schoolmaster, judging from what I had heard, appeared to my imagination awful above all others. With what profound dread was it then, that I took my way for the first time to the winter school; for the awful schoolmaster whom I was to meet was no other than the still more awful minister — that great, tall man, dressed in black, who preached and prayed in such solemn tones on the Sabbath. How my heart failed me and how my little frame trembled as I entered the school-house door. But how different was my experience from what I anticipated. That awful man received me with so sweet a smile and spoke in such tender tones, and in all things treated me and all the rest so gently, that my feelings were at once changed to those of confidence and love. Never shall I forget the delightful impressions which this near intercourse made on my tender mind. Never after that did I see him in the pulpit with any other than feelings of respectful affection. He too fitted me for college, and through all my earlier life, my mind received good influences from him. His benignant

* See the “District School as it Was, — by one who went to it.” By Rev. Warren Burton.

† TO THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS: —

Gentlemen, — I comply only in part with your request for a sketch of my remarks at our late delightful celebration. The first portion of them excited much more merriment than any thing humorous in them really deserved, but they were of a character suited only to the circumstances and the effervescence of the occasion, and not to the permanence of print. The latter portion, likewise, I hardly deem worthy of record. But my reminiscences of an early and venerated friend, I think, may be agreeable in perusal to many of the audience, and the publication will perhaps be doing some slight justice to one who contributed not a little to the improvement of our native town.

Respectfully yours,

WARREN BURTON.

countenance and gladdening smile will be among the last images that will fade from my remembrance. This good man was the Rev. Thomas Beede. It is a name that will excite pleasurable recollections in many bosoms here. All such will award to him with me his just due in regard to the interests of education in this town. He did not go on exactly in the old ways in his capacity as a schoolmaster. He introduced new subjects of attention and excited an uncommon interest among his pupils. To him, also, as an examiner of the schools, they owed much. And your Lyceum, sir, which has continued to flourish to a degree beyond the fortune of similar institutions in most towns, may trace its origin and prosperity somewhat perhaps to the spirit generated by this excellent man. He established a Lyceum in this town many years ago, as early as 1815 or '16, I think. Lyceum was a name not in popular use then, and the society alluded to was not so called. It was denominated the "Wilton Literary and Moral Society," and its objects were similar to those of your present association under a different name. The members of this early Society consisted of young gentlemen and ladies, and there were a few mere boys like myself at the time, who had a literary taste, such as to admit them to companionship with their superiors. We met at first, once a week or fortnight, at Mr. Beede's house, and then in a parlor in the Buss House, as it used to be called. We should have been lost in the spaciousness of a hall. There our revered Pastor presided over us under the title of Instructor, if I rightly remember. We discussed literary and moral questions orally or by writing. Indeed, subjects were given out at each meeting to be written upon against the next, and read before the Society and then put into the hands of the Instructor to be corrected. These were to me, and I doubt not to the rest, delightful meetings. Impulses were there given which in the chain of causes must, I think, have been of valuable consequence. I rejoice that I have this opportunity of reviving the recollections of some and informing the minds of others concerning this first Lyceum of our town — the

Wilton Literary and Moral Society. — Pleasantly remembered is it on its own account — and gratefully as well as pleasantly on account of him who established and presided over it.

[Song, — *The Schoolmaster.*]

10th Toast. *Our good Mother Massachusetts,* — Who christened us by the name of Salem-Canada. Though changed our name, our relation to her is not forgotten. Loved and honored be the native home of our fathers.

JOS. HALE ABBOT, Esq., of Boston, responded :—

Mr. President,—I shall not trespass upon your patience by attempting to make a long speech, but the sentiment just offered contains an allusion which induces me to ask a moment's attention to a document referred to by the orator of the day, and now in my possession, which seems of sufficient importance to deserve a few words of explanation at the present time. It is, sir, probably the oldest document extant relating to this town, and it makes us acquainted with one of the earliest of that series of measures, by which these pleasant hills and valleys have been reclaimed from the wild beasts and savages of the wilderness, and transformed into the abode of industry, intelligence, and virtue. The copy of it which I hold in my hand,* I took, through the courtesy of the Secretary of State, from the Records of the General Court of Massachusetts, at Boston, on Monday last. It is dated June 19, 1735, and is a vote upon "A Petition of Samuel King and others, who were in the expedition to Canada in the year 1690, and the descendants of such of

* *Extract from the Records of the General Court of Massachusetts, dated Thursday, June 19, 1735.*

SALEM CANADA.

A Petition of Samuel King and others, who were in the expedition to Canada in the year 1690, and the descendants of such of them as are dead, praying for a Grant of Land for a Township, in consideration of their or their ancestors' sufferings in the said Expedition.

In the House of Representatives: Read and Voted that the prayer of the petition be Granted And that Mr Samuel Chandler and Mr John Hobson together with such as shall be joined by the Hon^{ble} Board, be a Com^{ees} at the Charge of the Government to lay out a Township of the Contents of Six miles Square and west of the Narragansett Town called number three, and that they Return a Plat thereof to this Court within twelve months for Confirmation; and for the more effectual bringing forward the settlement of the said new town, Ordered the Said Town be laid out into Sixty three equal Shares, one of which to be for the first settled minister, One for the ministry, and one for the school; and that on each of the other Sixty shares the Petitioners do within three years from the Confirmation of the Plan have settled one Good family, who shall have a house built on his Home Lott, of eighteen feet square and seven feet stud at the least, and finished; that each Right or Grant have six acres of land brought to and ploughed or brought to English Grass and fitted for mowing. That they settle a learned orthodox Minister and build and finish a Convenient meeting house for the public worship of God; provided that in Case any of the Lotts or Rights are not duly settled in all Regards as aforesaid, then such Lott with the Rights thereof to Revert to and be at the Disposition of the Province.

In Council Read and Concurred, and Samuel Wells, Esq., is joined in the affair.

them as are dead, praying for a Grant of Land for a Township, in consideration of their and their ancestors' sufferings in the said Expedition."

It will be recollected that Massachusetts, at the time of the date of this petition, included within her territorial limits the present State of New Hampshire, and, both on that account and because most of the original settlers of this town were natives of that State, she may with great propriety be called, as she is in the sentiment to which I am permitted to respond, "Our good Mother." With what judgment and fidelity she discharged the duties of the maternal relation this document bears honorable witness. In accordance with the prayer of the petitioners, the General Court of Massachusetts ordered a committee to be appointed to lay out a town six miles square, under the name of "Salem-Canada," and to divide it into sixty-three shares, reserving "one share for the first settled minister, one for the ministry, and one for the school." The grantees are required "to settle a learned orthodox minister, and build and finish a convenient meeting-house for the public worship of God." Compare this ample provision for education and religious instruction with what was deemed an adequate provision for the physical comfort of the first settlers; a house smaller than many single apartments in the dwellings of the present inhabitants, viz. "eighteen feet square and seven feet stud," which each petitioner was required to build within three years after the confirmation of the plan returned by the Committee to the General Court. Who can fail to perceive how justly "our good Mother" appreciated the superior claims of the mind and heart above those of the body, and with what foresight and wisdom she sought the true and lasting welfare of her children? What monarch or state can contest with her the glory of setting the first example of making legal provision for the education and religious instruction of the hardy pioneers, who go forth to subdue the wilderness and extend the domains of civilization? And how much to her wise policy in this respect is New England indebted for the intelligence and virtue that distinguish its inhabitants!

This document is interesting in another point of view. It connects the first settlement of this town with one of the most remarkable events recorded in the early history of New England, the expedition under the command of Sir William Phips, undertaken in 1690, by the Province of Massachusetts. Its object was the conquest of Canada, as a means of securing the Colonies against the frequent incursions of the Indians at the instigation of their French allies. In

that expedition many of the petitioners were personally engaged. They who recollect the disasters that attended the ill-fated enterprise, disasters of war, disasters by fire, by tempest and by plague, and also the courage and fortitude with which they were endured, will not be slow to acknowledge, that to have voluntarily braved its dangers and sufferings argues in the petitioners no small share of that courage and energy, which fit men to encounter the hardships incident to the condition of the early settlers of the wilderness, and which they have transmitted to not a few of their descendants. The impoverishment of the Treasury of Massachusetts, after the utter failure of the expedition, led to the issue of bills of credit to pay the soldiers and to defray the other expenses that had been incurred. The depreciation of these bills, which soon took place, gave to the soldiers who had received them, an equitable claim for further remuneration. Accordingly, in repeated instances, grants of land were made by the Legislature of Massachusetts, under the general name of "Canada," with the name of the town prefixed to which the grantees belonged. It is to be presumed, therefore, that the signers of the petition, to whom the northern part of Wilton and a part of the present town of Lyndeborough were granted under the name of "Salem-Canada," were inhabitants of Salem and its vicinity. I beg leave to offer in conclusion this sentiment:—

The People of Wilton,—May they ever emulate the courage, energy, and patriotism of the men, who were rewarded with the grant of Salem-Canada for their sufferings in the cause of their country.

11th Toast. *The Orator of the day*,—Though long gone from among us, he has this day shown himself a true son of Wilton, and well acquainted with its history.

Rev. E. PEABODY responded ;

Mr. President,—I believe that it is deemed proper that a toast should be responded to. After having, however, I fear, more than wearied out the most generous patience, I shall not venture this afternoon to lay an additional tax upon it. I would only say with reference to the sentiment with which I have been honored, that it requires but little of filial virtue in the sons of Wilton, however far distant or long absent they may be, to remember their native place. For what have they, or rather what have they not, to remember. Here are the hills and streams on which their eyes first opened; here were the schools and religious institutions and the examples of wise and good

men to whose influence in early youth they owe all that they now have, which they most prize and cherish ; here were their early companions, now widely scattered or no longer among the living ; here were the friends of their parents, and here too perhaps are their parents' graves. If the spot consecrated by the affections is home, then here, however far they may have wandered, must their home continue to be. When we revisit these scenes, we still claim the privilege of saying that we return home. And when we number our own blessings, we count among the greatest of them, the fact that here we had our birth, and, however unworthy our after lives may have proved, that amidst the good influences and institutions of this place we received our first direction in the path of life.

Permit me, Mr. President, to give a sentiment in which every emigrant son of Wilton will, I know, join me.

Wilton, our birth-place.—The home of early years and ever the home of grateful memories.

12th Toast. *The Emigrants of Wilton*—dispersed far and wide—though not all this day with us, yet they are of us ; our good wishes attend the absent, and to the present we give our “welcome home.”

[Song.—*The Boatman's Welcome Home.*]

Remarks of Rev. A. A. LIVERMORE, of Keene.

Mr. President,—It is pleasant to be so cordially welcomed home ; yet there is one painful feeling which the emigrant, as well as the resident, finds it difficult to suppress. A name* has more than once been mentioned, which touches a cord in every heart. And though remarks have already been made upon him, who is thus brought freshly and sadly to mind, I may be permitted to dwell upon the subject a little longer. Indeed, there would be something wanting to the solemnities of this day, if he who looked forward to it with so much interest, and was so deeply engaged in preparing for its observance, should be passed by in silence, or with only a hasty notice. And yet I feel that his character cannot be set forth truly in any words I can speak, but that it has long ago been written in the fleshly tables of your hearts, and engraved in durable lines upon your memories and sympathies. For he was known and read of all men, and he is canonized in the affections of his friends and fellow-townsmen. He just lived to complete the first century of this town, and then by a

* Samuel Abbot, Esq.

sudden and dreadful death was removed hence. As we commemorate the past, and enter upon a new epoch, it is good for us to meditate upon his life, for the lessons it teaches are suggestive and beautiful.

He was a good representative and embodiment of Wilton character. In enumerating the elements of his mind, you would find the traits for which this people have been most distinguished. More than any other son of the place that has deceased, he might probably be taken as the fruit and expression of the last century's doings and gainings in this humble town. Ingenuity, integrity, thoroughness, public spirit, simplicity, liberality and piety were blended together in him, and for these traits the people have been notable. But in him there was no predominance of one over another, so as to mar the proportion, but all were harmoniously combined; so that you could not say, here is too much, and there too little, but that all is good and fair. In his manners he was simple and unassuming; never obtruding himself, but rather shunning notice; gentle and attentive to all. In conversation, rich and original, bringing into play the strength of a refined intellect, the varied stores of science, literature and religion, and, with a keen zest for truth, a deep vein of humor. In mind, acute, logical, thorough and intensely active. In business, prudent, energetic, economical, just, and of a wise forecast. In knowledge, accurate, varied, and profound. As an inventor, remarkable for his power of reducing abstract principles in science to an easy, practical application. As a citizen, public spirited, and ready to sacrifice property and popularity for the good of society; foremost in every useful enterprise, a friend of education, lyceums and libraries, watching with a deep attention over the young, and taking the liveliest interest in their intellectual and spiritual culture. As a Christian, firm and decided in his own belief, but charitable in his opinions towards others, fruitful in good works, unblemished in life, an observer of the ordinances, and a strong upholder of the institutions of the gospel. Tenderly attached to his friends, social in his feelings, he was the joy and enlivener of the domestic circle. But why need I describe what many feel and know. He has gone, and for him to die was gain. But the tears of a whole town bore witness how much he was loved and respected, how deeply mourned. All felt that the community was bereft of one of its noblest men. Yet all has not perished with him. Though dead, he yet speaketh. His virtues will inspire many hearts, and kindle, as with electric touch, the souls of

his fellow-men. He lived not to himself, nor has he died to himself. Peace be to his bright and holy memory!

But, sir, it is well to ask here, whence and how came he and such as he? What has made Wilton what it is, New England what it is? Was it a chance culture, an accidental education, that developed the minds and characters of the last century, and changed one unbroken wilderness into a highly civilized land, and reared the noblest institutions of the world? No. There was a cause. And we ought to learn it, and ponder upon it. I say there is a cause for the virtue, and activity, and happiness of our people. And that cause, I hesitate not to say, lies here. The people of this community have, with few exceptions, been trained up in happy, virtuous, holy homes. We sat, in infancy and youth, in heavenly places, and rich influences brooded over our pliant spirits as dew upon the tender plant.

True, here in New England, and especially here in Wilton, Nature has lavished her fairest scenes, and breathed from the Most High the breath of life into our souls. Yes, blessed be these hills and valleys for the choice, sweet influences they have shed upon the young communities, springing up here. Blessed be these granite mountains, that stand like vast citadels of safety around the blue ring of the horizon, and, gilded by the glories of the setting sun, carry up the thoughts to sublimity and God. Blessed be the fair skies which bend over us here with all their sparkling hosts of light and glory. Blessed be the pure breezes which sing from the northwestern hills, and bear health and exhilaration on their wings. But thrice blessed be our homes. Our homes, where love and happiness wove a charm and a spell for our hearts, never, never to be unloosed. There "heaven lay about us in our infancy." The blue sky was more dear to us, because it arched proudly over the cherished roof of home. The sun and wind and rain and snow were loved because they brought their treasures and laid them at the feet of our sanctuary. The forests and vales and roaring brooks have been sweet in association from this great central attraction.

And what made our homes in this great wilderness so happy and genial — so fitted to tempt forth both heart and mind, and develop the elastic energies of a free people? I will name, sir, two things, not because they are the only two, but because they are the most important — Woman and Religion.

Much has been said of the part woman played, or rather *worked*, in the grand drama of these settlements. But the theme is an inex-

haustible one. What would have been the Pilgrim Fathers without the Pilgrim Mothers? Shaggy barbarians of the woods. But woman came to cheer and refine the rude settlers. She bravely dared the terrors of the wilderness to plant the pleasant amenities of social life in the log cabin. She forded rivers and penetrated forests to come hither. She came to dwell under the shades of the vast and savage woods. Her employments were humble, but her aims lofty. "She looked well to the ways of her household, and ate not the bread of idleness." Through long days and sleepless nights, she watched over her tender children. And when distant labors, or still worse, the trumpet of war, summoned her husband away from her side, she steadily plied her lonely tasks, watching his return, or learned, dreadful news, that he would return no more forever. We have often read of the horrors of the wars of that period, and got by heart the story of the labors, dangers and sufferings of our forefathers. It would be unjust to forget that those who staid at home often endured far more than those who braved the flaming lines of battle — far more in heart-sickness, hope deferred, hope destroyed, and all the nameless, haunting terrors of the deep woods, where the wild beast and wilder Indian were their only neighbors for miles and miles. But why need I say more? The subject has already been anticipated. I will only say, let us never forget what heroic, much-enduring woman has done for the happy homes of New-England.

But, sir, there was another agent that helped to make us what we are as a people, that consecrated our homes as holy places, and nerved our fathers' and mothers' hearts to do and dare nobly. It was religion. They brought with them the word of God as the ark of their safety, the shechinah of the Divine presence and favor. Morning and evening they offered praise to heaven from their forest dwellings. The house of God gathered them, from near and far, weekly to pay their adorations to the Great Guardian of their exposed lives, and hallow their minds with the influences of the Sabbath and the sanctuary. Every thing around and within them tended to keep alive their sense of dependence on God, and their value of the gospel of Jesus. Endangered, tempted, weary, suffering, alone, they looked to the source of comfort and strength, and found rest and courage and patience unto the end. With them religion was first, religion last, and religion midst. Other lands may boast richer soils, other climates may be more bland, other mountains may yield more precious minerals, other skies may shine with softer hues, but where

shall we look for homes as pure and religious, as free and happy as in our dear New England? These have been the glory of the past century; they are the hope of the new one. Woman and religion have made them what they have been; they alone can make them what they ought to be. Guard well our homes from evil, and our nation is girded round about with a munition of rocks, and a wall of fire. Permit me to offer this sentiment.

The Homes of Wilton, — Endeared by woman, sanctified by religion; fountains of living waters, which made the wilderness and solitary place glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Remarks of REV. SAMUEL BARRETT, of Boston.

Mr. President, — I feel grateful for the kind word from the chair inviting me to address the meeting; but at so late an hour when many of our friends must be thinking of their homes, and after every topic appropriate to the occasion seems to have been touched upon by one or another of those who have already spoken, it ought, no doubt, to occur to me, and indeed it does, that the best thing I could do would be to offer a brief sentiment expressive of my hearty good wishes, and then sit down.

Nevertheless, I will venture to avail myself, for a few moments, of the opportunity afforded me; and the more readily, because I think our revered mother, whose hundredth year we are celebrating, deserves a little more commendation than she has yet received, and because, being but an adopted son, I may feel at liberty to say some things respecting her good qualities which one of her own offspring might, from a delicate sense of propriety, be reluctant to utter.

My first words, Mr. President, must declare, as fitly they should, the grateful feelings I cherish towards the inhabitants of Wilton, — from no one of whom did I ever, during the whole period of my residence here, receive any other than tokens of good will, and to not a few of whom I am indebted for acts of great kindness. And in this connexion, let me, as my heart prompts, make respectful and affectionate mention of him who ministered at this altar, both when I came, a little child, to the town, and when, in early manhood, I left it — of him who, on the spot where I now stand, poured upon my head the sacred waters of baptism, from whose hands I received for the first time the elements of the holy communion, and to whom as pastor, instructor and friend, I was for many years under obligations that cannot be cancelled. When my brother, who preceded me, pro-

nounced the name of Beede, and spoke of the services he rendered to the children and youth of his flock in the early period of his ministry, many, very many, I am sure, were the hearts in this assembly, which, with mine, responded most feelingly and gratefully, and sent up the prayer that his last days might be his happiest.

And now, sir, while my thoughts are recurring to the advantages enjoyed here when I was a boy, let me dwell a little on two of the many institutions, highly creditable to this town. Lyceums, as all know, are the boast of recent times, far and wide. Thanks to my brother before alluded to, for noticing as he did the one that existed here, though under another name, a quarter of a century ago. Well do I remember all the initiatory steps that led to its formation, and it was my privilege to be present at its first meeting. It is very pleasant to me to see so many to-day, who were among its earliest members, and who can testify to the satisfaction and improvement derived from its exercises. For one, I shall ever be thankful for the benefit I received from it; and I rejoice to know that its salutary influences have not ceased to be felt by others. Nor is it less gratifying to me to learn that the Lyceum, as re-organized in 1830, proved interesting and useful as well to the older as to the younger classes of this community, and that, as now conducted, it is an instrument of great good. Sunday schools too, as every one is aware, have for many years been regarded with high favor in all parts of our country. You, sir, need not be told, though others may, that one was in successful operation in this town so long ago as 1816. I now see before me one of the two ladies* who had the principal agency in establishing it. Where, in the United States, was there a Sunday School at an earlier date—one, I mean, designed for the children of the parish indiscriminately, and having for its main object their moral and religious culture? If any would know how well it was conducted at that period, let me refer him to the orator of the day, for he was a pupil. And as regards the school at the present time, it delights me to hear that it is in a flourishing condition, having on its list, notwithstanding the formation of two others in the town, the names of no less than one hundred and thirty pupils and teachers, and possessing a remarkably well selected library of four hundred volumes. May the Sunday Schools never cease to be objects of deep interest to this whole people.

* Miss Sarah W. Livermore and Miss Phebe Abbot.

It would give me pleasure, sir, to say something of other means of intellectual, moral and religious culture, enjoyed here, as for instance, the three Churches, the ten Public Schools, the Temperance Society, the Sunday noon Reading Room, the Ministerial, Parish and Juvenile Libraries; but I pass them all by for the sake of having a moment's time to suggest the inquiry, — deserving attention especially from the young, upon whom the future character of the town will so much depend, — whether it is not owing to considerations of the kind just noticed, far more than to any and every other cause, that we find the occasion on which we have now met, one of such high, unmingled satisfaction? Or to give the question a general bearing, — what, in the view of reason and common sense, to say nothing of Christianity, is the best ground of one's pride and joy, as he thinks of the place where he was born or bred? Is it that the landscape around is more beautiful to look upon, or the air is purer and more invigorating, or its soil is more fertile, or its hills and valleys are covered with more numerous flocks, or its water-falls move a greater amount of machinery, or its houses rise in larger numbers and more showy magnificence, or its inhabitants multiply faster and grow rich more rapidly, than can be the boast of other places? Oh! no, sir. These, and like considerations, though, when connected with others of a higher order, they help to strengthen the regard one feels for his native town, yet do not, in any proportionate degree, excite and nourish his love and respect for it, as do its intelligence, its morality, its piety — as do those traits of character in its inhabitants which ennoble and adorn our nature. No, sir. Physical advantages, of whatever sort, are not to be compared with those of an intellectual, moral and religious kind; and therefore one's feeling of attachment to his old home is most elevated and best founded only when the mind that is there is free and active, and knowledge abounds; when the heart that is there is pure and alive, and noble sentiments prevail; when public opinion is on the side of truth and virtue and piety, and the affairs of the town are conducted in uprightness and for the common good, and the influences of a useful education are to be traced throughout society, and the people are liberal in support of the schools, and the temples of God are the resorts of devout multitudes who in rational and fervent homage acknowledge their dependence and obligations.

Whenever such, sir, is the condition of a town, who, whether he be emigrant or resident, does not and ought not to feel very deeply,

especially at a time like this, the greatness of the privilege of having had his birth-place and training there? Who must not be elevated with sentiments of self-respect, of gratitude, of joy, as he dwells on the blessing of such an allotment?

Now, Mr. President, will you allow me the liberty to say, that such in most respects, is the town in which we have met on the present occasion. Let not the passing stranger smile as if any thing said in praise of Wilton; hilly, rocky Wilton; containing but forty-five inhabitants to the square mile; without stage-coach or post office, even so recently as when most of us were entering upon mature life; having now but one doctor and no lawyer; and, what some may deem a still greater deficiency, not a drop of rum to be bought at its centre;—let not the stranger smile, I say, as if any thing said in praise of such a town, must needs partake of exaggeration. Sir, let me tell him, that, on these steep hills, in these narrow valleys, by the side of these rocks, there grow up noble men and noble women. And for his better satisfaction, let him be assured that I do not speak ignorantly on this subject. Though not a native of the place, yet I was very young when my parents brought me to it; for ten years I lived here constantly; during the next ten years I felt that my home was in this town more than in any other; and ever since, I have been kept acquainted with the habits of the people almost as much as if I had continued to reside in it. Besides,—pardon, sir, this egotism, for it is indulged in with good intent,—my opportunities for comparing this with other communities have not been very limited. It has fallen to my lot to sojourn, more or less, in most sections of New-England; and recently, this very season, I have made a journey four thousand miles south and west, have travelled in fifteen of these United States, have visited forty cities and I know not how many towns;—and now, after all I have seen, I am free to declare, that, in my opinion, it would be difficult to find within the borders of the land, another spot of territory, possessing no greater natural advantages, that surpasses—I might, perhaps, say, equals—this, as regards those qualities of character in the inhabitants, which truly deserve the respectful consideration of the wise and good.—Of course, no one will understand me as speaking thus of all the dwellers here, indiscriminately. In this town, as in others,—sorry am I to say it,—there are individuals, who, if noticed at all, must be spoken of in terms of reproach. Nevertheless, in what other community, I confidently ask, are exceptions of this sort less frequently to be met with? Where are fewer

persons to be found voluntarily ignorant or wilfully idle or studiously perverse? Where are the burdens growing out of pauperism and crime lighter to be borne than here? What people, as a whole, more industrious and independent, or more sober-minded, orderly, peaceful and exemplary? What people more generally intelligent, moral and religious? In what town do a greater proportion of the inhabitants devote their leisure to useful reading and elevated thought? Where are schools better supported, or churches better attended? Where are the prevailing customs of the people less exceptionable, or their recreations and amusements more in accordance with reason and good sense? And as touching the great cause of Temperance, where, except here, and perhaps a very few other places, could a centennial celebration, like this, be gotten through with without the aid of strong drink? * Moreover, sir, what town in the Union, of equal population, ever, in the same number of years, sent so few of her sons to prison, or so many to college? In a word, what soil of like means and facilities for the cultivation of human minds and hearts, is trodden by men and women of better character, or covers the remains of more virtuous dead?

God knows, Mr. President, my purpose in saying these things has not been to please the inhabitants of Wilton; had such been my object, I should have chosen another method of effecting it, — aware as I must have been that their characteristic sense of modesty would be offended rather than gratified by bald commendation, offered in their presence. But I wished, — and in the motive is my apology, — I wished, by pointing out some of the intellectual, moral, and religious habits and privileges of the town, and thus fixing attention, for a moment, on the true causes of the gratitude and joy we all so deeply feel to-day, to remind this community, particularly the youthful portions of it, of their high responsibility and many obligations; — the youthful portions of it, I repeat, for to them I meant chiefly to speak; — yes, to you, young men and young women of Wilton — to you, upon whom it will depend, in so great a degree, whether or not, this, your native town, so honorably distinguished in the past, and so richly furnished now, shall go forward, henceforth, through another century of years, improved and improving, in what deserves and gains the respect and love of the wise and good among men, and what God, from his holy heavens, looks down upon with the smiles of his approbation.

* No ardent spirits, nor even wine, were used on the occasion.

Mr. President, I beg pardon for having occupied so much time, at this late hour, and close with offering the following sentiment :—

The good people of Wilton, — Ever may the highest objects of their ambition be the worthiest distinctions alike of individuals and communities, to wit, **INTELLIGENCE, PIETY, and VIRTUE.**

In making up the foregoing account of the proceedings, we accidentally omitted to insert one of the regular toasts, viz. : —

“ *The Miller Guards*, — if called to the field of their country, may their motto be, ‘ I ’ll try, sir. ’ ”

As regards the various performances of the singing choir, the effect of which was so delightful, we, of course, could only name them in the order in which they occurred.

At intervals, during the day, the audience was very agreeably entertained with instrumental music, by a band composed chiefly of members belonging to the neighboring towns.

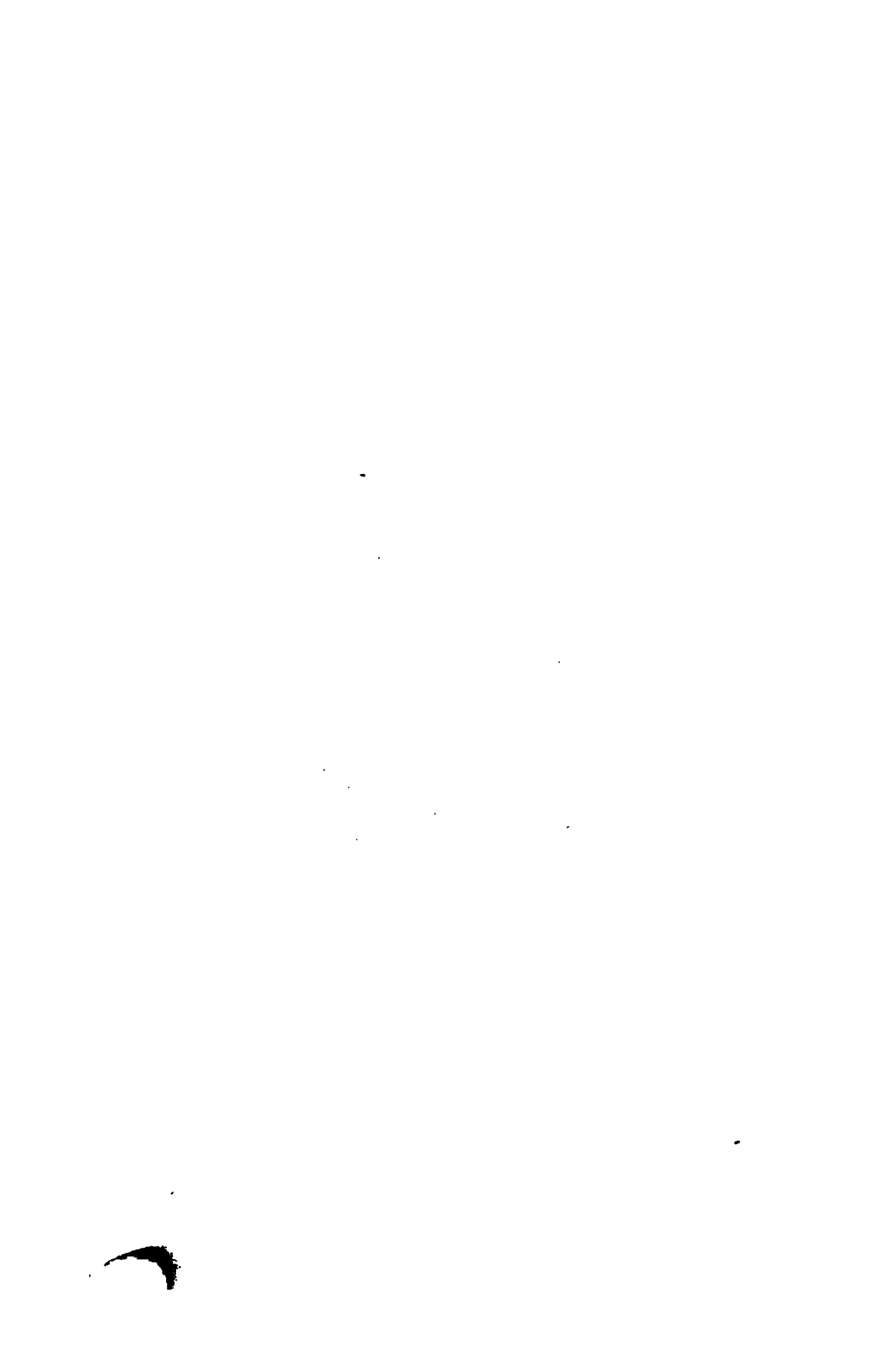
It may not be wholly without interest to some to be informed, that with the above exception, nearly all who contributed to render the exercises of the occasion what they were, are natives of Wilton; and that the few who had their birth-place elsewhere either are, or have been, residents in the place.

We have only to regret, that several sons of the town from abroad were prevented, by want of time, from giving utterance to the thoughts and feelings they had come prepared to express.

It was about sunset when the meeting broke up; but the multitude had been made too happy to be in haste to depart. Long did many of them linger in and around the old church, collected here and there in groups, conversing now on the high satisfactions the day had afforded, now on one and another of the many affecting scenes of former years brought vividly to mind, and seeming only to regret that the shades of evening were forcing them so soon to separate, and that it could never fall to their lot to meet on such an occasion again.

God grant, that the impressions of that blessed day may be lasting and salutary, and that all of us may so seek the true interests of our beloved town, as to cause our memories to be precious to our descendants who shall gather themselves together at its Second Centennial Celebration.





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